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SAMYAG-VĀK SPECIAL SERIES - V

SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE AND TRADITIONAL THOUGHT

A. K. Saran

Foreword
Govind Chandra Pande

CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF HIGHER TIBETAN STUDIES
SARNATH, VARANASI

B.E. 2542 C.E. 1998

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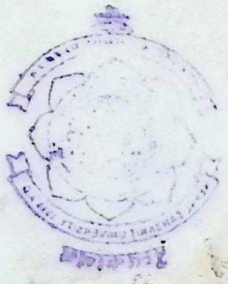

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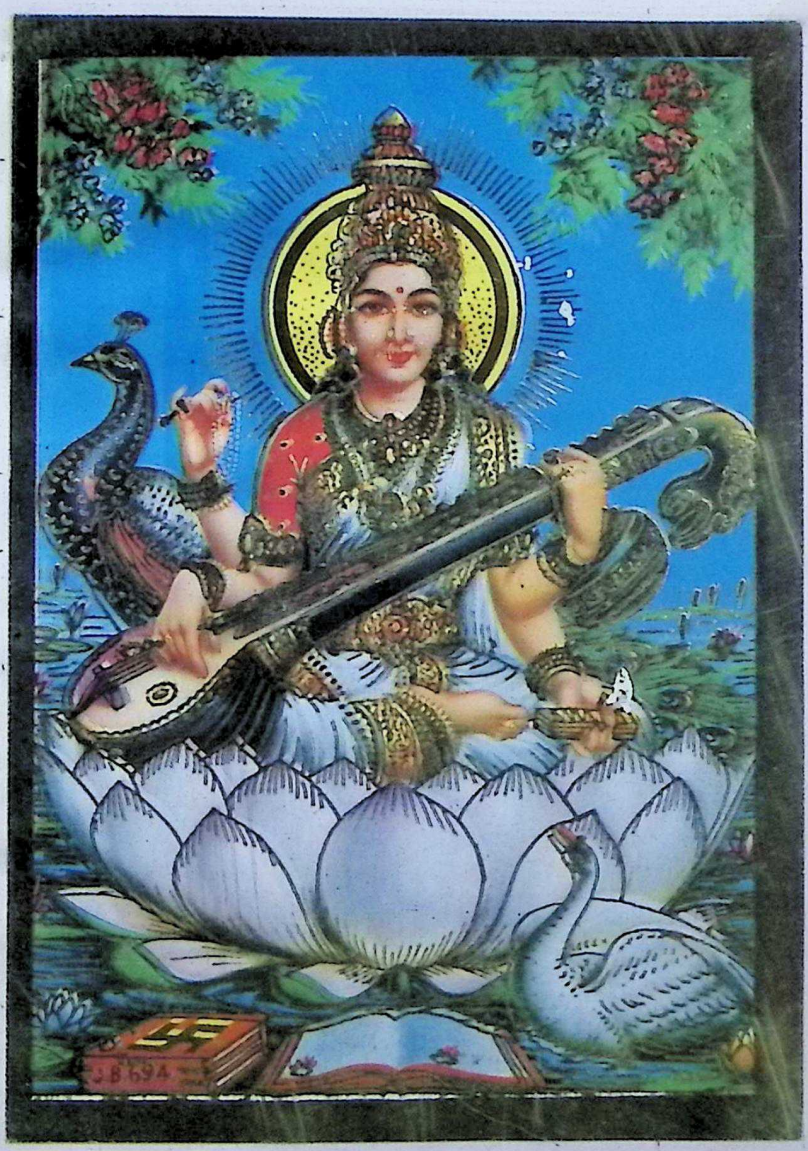

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भोट विद्या संस्थानम्

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Publisher's Note

Modernity made its 'take off' from all other ages and cultures by rejecting the transcendentally given and traditionally inherited authority and thereby attempting to establish itself independently of anything other than itself. The very idea of 'self-grounding' being self-contradictory—which logically amounts to 'groundlessness'!—this *causa sui* project of modernity is, *self-defeating* and can be pursued only at an enormous cost: a self-proclaimed age of reason and humanism has thus turned out to be the age of unprecedented destruction and inhumanity. It is *no* accident: something that internally contradicts itself can *manifest* itself only in a variety of violent ways, which then can be *contemplated* and *carried out* only by those deluded by their own self-will. That is why modernity and white universal imperialism are synonymous. The white man's pretentious 'universalism' can be imposed on others by *imperial* violence: one that eradicates all the realities that do not yield to it, or, are a thorn in the flesh. Indeed, once it started with the willful divorce from its own transcendent Root, the *ethnocentric* entelechy of the project is inevitable. "To think *for* oneself is to think *of* oneself" (Coomaraswamy). The entire history of modern Western thought up-to-date is, accordingly, a story of a series of doomed failures of this *never-realizable* imperial project; and of *unrepenting*

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attempts, nevertheless, to *cover* these failures in one new form after another, evading their grave implications. Edmund Husserl, for example, eagerly expecting the phoenix-like 'resurrection' of Western Reason, writes that if through "as yet unconcluded movement" of modern philosophy "reason had in fact become manifest, fully conscious of itself in its own essential form," then it would be proved that "European humanity bears within itself an absolute idea, rather than being merely an empirical anthropological type like "China" or "India"," and that "the spectacle of the Europeanization of all other civilizations bears witness to the rule of an absolute meaning, one which is proper to the sense, rather than to a historical non-sense, of the world" (*The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*).

It is this kind of ethnocentric will to mask the total and final bankruptcy of their cherished perverse project—indeed, the *necrophilia*, which is virtually implied in all modern social and human sciences—that is Prof. Saran's task to demolish *once and for all*: his critiques of those sciences being their *obituary*. Prof. Saran intends his critique to be *internal* (that is, one proceeding dialectically *from within* the very system that is being critiqued) which alone, strictly speaking, is the proper one and decisive: Professor Saran starts from *their* assumptions, explores all the possibilities that logically flow from them. He shows

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that each way is a blind alley and untenable on its own premises. In fact Professor Saran hopes and prays for the realization of his project of writing critiques of Sociology of Religion, Sociology of Law, and Sociology of Art besides Sociology of Knowledge. It will, however, provide a basis for the satisfaction of man's yearning for the Absolute. So far only the first one (the present Essay) has been completed: apart from some other works on related themes, the other three remain to be written.

The present Critique of Sociology of Knowledge is especially important, not only because it is designed to constitute the basis for all other particular sociologies (and social sciences, in general) which will remain unfounded without it. Unlike other particular sociologies, Sociology of Knowledge is *itself* knowledge. It is thus inescapably entangled in the problem of self-reference: that is, the infinitely regressive nature of Knowledge. Moreover the relation of knowledge to reality, inevitably and prototypically represents the central *aporia* of modern man's self-grounding project.

Being part of this self-grounding project, the task of Sociology of Knowledge is, in a word, to provide it *ex post facto a priori* legitimacy. When modernity declared its Advent, there had been *always already* the world and peoples of traditions. They, since then, have continued to surround it. In other words, as long as modernity does not

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rule out the existence (past and present) of a world totally alien to its own, Sociology of Knowledge has to explain, in its own terms, the nature of this huge gap and shift that actually took place therefrom: a 'breaking off' that in reality was brought about by modernity's own 'unilateral proclamation of independence'. The general strategy of social sciences to cope with this challenge is to relativize and historicize (often with the help of "pre-history") traditional world and metaphysics and religions. No longer can man live in the Twilight of the Absolute.

Originally and in a much shorter version this Essay was read at the V World Congress of Sociology, held at Washington D.C. in 1962 as an invited contribution. Later it was published in three instalments in *Sociological Bulletin*, Bombay during 1964 and 1965.

For the present publication, the Essay has been much enlarged, brought up-to-date and includes an examination of Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge*.

S. Rinpoche
Director

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Epistle Dedicatory

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to Mahesh

The radical illegibility of which we are speaking is not irrationality, is not despair provoking non-sense, is not everything within the domains of the incomprehensible and the illogical that is anguishing. Such an interpretation—or determination—of the illegible already belongs to the book, is enveloped within the possibility of the volume. Original illegibility is not simply a moment interior to the book, to reason or to logos; nor is it any more their opposite, having no relationship of symmetry to them, being incommensurable with them. Prior to the book (in the nonchronological sense), original illegibility is therefore the very possibility of the book and, within it, of the ulterior and eventual opposition of "rationalism" and "irrationalism." The Being that is announced within the illegible is beyond these categories, beyond, as it writes itself, its own name.

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Foreword

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Govind Chandra Pande

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When my esteemed and dear friend Prof. A. K. Saran asked me to write a Foreword to the present work, I accepted the suggestion readily since I deem it a privilege to be associated with his writing even though the association may resemble a *bādarāyaṇa-sambandha*. Nevertheless I also feel embarrassed owing to my awareness of my inadequacy and lack of *adhikāra* in what is the principal theme of Prof. Saran's discussion in this work. There is, of course, another reason for my willingness to write this Foreword and that is my profound admiration for the deep insight and incisive rigour of Prof. Saran's thought with which I find myself in essential agreement. I write the Foreword as a personal homage to what is undoutedly an outstanding work of our times.

Over the last two centuries the challenge of modernization to tradition has produced two principal reactions. In the West this response has taken the form of selectively rejecting, reinterpreting and replacing traditional thought by the kind of thinking of which the classic example is provided by the social sciences and their foundational discipline, the sociology of knowledge. On the other hand, the challenge of the dominant modern Western civilization to the traditional civilizations of the East has given rise to several different responses among the Western-educated non-Westerners. Some seek to withdraw into the shell of

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tradition, some seek to become proselytizers of modernity, some seek to effect a synthesis or syncresis between Western modernity and tradition. Prof. Saran's response is different from these and expresses his depth of conviction and intellectual courage. Regarding the critique of error as the proper dialectical approach to truth, he examines the foundations of contemporary social science critically and exposes their unsoundness. By a penetrating analysis he brings out the inner inconsistencies of the major versions of the sociology of knowledge. Reading through his pages one cannot help feeling that nothing except sheer *hubris* arising from wishful thinking underlies the whole enterprise.

Sociology is as characteristic of the modern age as theology has been of traditional civilizations. Plato and Aristotle, Manu and Kautilya, Buddha and Aśvaghoṣa, K'ung Fu-Tzu and Lao Tzu have analyzed the public life of man in the light of traditional wisdom and despite wide-ranging and important differences they exhibit common features characteristic of any traditional civilization. Their rationality does not reject theology and metaphysics. They do not make a radical separation between reality and goodness. They do not regard the experience of the senses as the last court of appeal in matters of truth and goodness. They do not think that man is simply a physical body which ceases at death. They believe in the spiritual nature of man

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and in some kind of afterlife. They believe in the innate capacity of human reason to distinguish good from evil. Their science of public life combines the analysis of phenomena with the formulation and application of ethical principles and thus remains normative. It is continuous with religion and metaphysics. Their notion of science is ultimately that of a tradition of higher reason or wisdom which has its source in the intuition or revelation of sages and seers. It is the counsel of Socrates at the end of the Republic "that we hold fast ever to the heavenly way and follow after justice and virtue always, considering that the soul is immortal and able to endure every sort of good and every sort of evil. Thus shall we live dear to one another and to the gods, both while remaining here and when . . . we receive our reward." Confucius said, "The gentleman stands in awe of three things. He is in awe of the Decree of Heaven (*t'ien-ming*). He is in awe of great men. He is in awe of the words of the sages." (*Analects*, 16. 8)

The Hindu tradition is unanimous that the ultimate source of the knowledge of the socio-ethical order or *Dharma* (which corresponds to Greek *dikē* and Chinese *Tao*, *Te* and *Li*) is Revelation or *Śruti*. For the Buddhists the source of *dharma* is the tradition (*āgama*) based on the words of the Enlightened One (*Sambuddha*). *Dharma*, *Dikē* or *Tao* signifies the perennial moral order which is the ever shining

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paradigm for human society in the hearts of the wise (*nihitam guhāyām*).

The traditional scheme of theoretical knowledge included the study of such sciences as logic, grammar and rhetoric, mathematics, astronomy and medicine. Such sciences, however, as those of agriculture and animal husbandry, metallurgy and chemistry, architecture and engineering and diverse manufactures were pursued at an empirical and practical level. Metaphysics remained the queen of sciences (*adhyātmavidyā vidyānām*) and *Dharma* the basis of society (*dhārayate prajāḥ*).

Physical sciences and technologies were linked to the practical needs of the civilization. Traditional knowledge was structured largely around man and his consciousness, spiritual, moral and ritual. It did not regard the utilitarian exploitation of Nature as the central concern of man. It is necessary here to guard the unwary reader against understanding tradition in a merely historical manner. Tradition as well as modernity have an ideal meaning which is never fully realized in history. Historically given civilizations are thus never complete or consistent expressions of their own foundational vision or *Weltanschauung*. Their *Zusammenhang* is inevitably disturbed by confusions and contradictions so that in part they give the appearance of being mere congeries.

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Nevertheless all past civilizations have believed in the reality of a universal *philosophia perennis* or *sanātanadharma* of which the historical manifestations have been particularized by *Yuga-dharma*, the specific ethos of a cultural epoch, and obscured by *adharma* (anomie, *hubris*).

Modern historiography, however, rejects such a notion of *dharma* and replaces it by that of a multiplicity of contingent and evolving ethnic or national 'cultures'. Anthropology emerging under the aegis of Darwinism, positivism, and colonialism, explained preliterate cultures as formed by the need and pressures of seeking security and satisfaction through environmental adaptation and social cohesion. In this process while technology and need-based or power-based institutionalization were more or less rational devices, religion, myth and ritual were irrational, illusory or even deceptive congeries of ideas. Primitive technology belongs to the linear evolutionary process of the history of science, primitive religion is the clearest instance of a socially determined, false 'ideology'.

The philosophical and historical study of comparative religion extended a somewhat similar treatment to all religions except the three 'higher' Semitic religions. Max Muller saw in the *Vedas* primitive fancies, de La Vallée Poussin discerned in Buddhism, after its life-long study, a species of 'vulgar thaumaturgy'. Sociologists like Comte

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and Marx went on to generalize this rejection and apply it to all religions and metaphysics. Others hope in their wake that in the evolving age of positive science, religion would be increasingly replaced by humanism.

Since the days of Herodotus historians have noted ethnic diversities but from the 18th century the comparative study of societies and civilizations in the self-assured West has led historians to the idea of culture as a socio-historically determinate ethnic or 'national' form. The profound influence of Darwinian, Marxist and positivist thought on the historiography of ideas is particularly relevant here. This historiography is generally deterministic, evolutionist and relativist. For scientific ideas it emphasizes their rationality, utility, openness and historically progressive character. In other realms it tends to treat ideas as mere beliefs or expressions of non-cognitive attitudes. Among the different labels under which the historical study of ideas is pursued, Lovejoy mentions, "The historical part of sociology, in so far as specialists in these subjects take account, as they now increasingly do, of intellectual or quasi-intellectual processes, of "ruling ideas" or "climates of opinion," either as causal factors in, or as consequences or "rationalizations" of, the political institutions, laws, *mores*, or social conditions prevalent in a given period—the subject sometimes designated as *Wissenssoziologie*." Now in so far as the

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history of ideas is concerned with the origin, affiliation and structure of significant cognitive ideas it cannot acquire depth without relying on some theory or theories of ideas which would necessarily range over logic, epistemology, ontology and psychology. To ascertain the conditions of their historical manifestation and role, a sociological theory would also be required. Despite their apparent disparateness these diverse kinds of theories have a profound inner connection which is rarely visible to the mere specialist. To quote Lovejoy again, one meets in the history of ideas the general phenomenon of *"the presence and influence of the same presuppositions or other operative "ideas" in very diverse provinces of thought and in different periods."* Collingwood's 'absolute presuppositions', Whitehead's 'form of the forms of thought', Kuhn's 'paradigm', the commonly used notion of *Weltanschauung* or cultural perspective, are some instances of such an awareness of overarching connections between different realms of ideas. To attempt to understand and explain this interconnection as a phenomenon arising from autonomous social causation, is tenable only on the assumption that man is nothing but a social animal and ideas only a part of behaviour or praxis. Such assumptions, however, have no force outside the untenable perspectives of empiricism, naturalism and pragmatism. That such perspectives should find wide

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acceptance in the modern age can itself be understood only in terms of an immanent socio-historical determinism in which the leading role is played by the belief that the perspective of natural science, technology and industry is also the working philosophy for all cognitive enterprise. This is a one-sided exaggeration induced by the practical success achieved by the applications of natural science to improve the material conditions of man, and is in this respect itself an 'ideology'. In a way this ideology which upholds that man's fulfilment lies in the life of wealth and power, is not in itself new. Even some ancient teachers denied the independence of any science except that of the body politic. Some made the denial because they were thoroughgoing empiricists and materialists. Others, however, only stressed the role of the state in the occasioning and maintenance of tradition.

It is well-known how Hegel had thought that the general forms or categories of knowledge can be discovered as a timeless dialectic culminating in the idea of self-consciousness and how Nature and History can be understood from the vantage-point of the Absolute Idea, and how Marx had argued that the categories of knowledge or the forms of consciousness are derived from the historically changing forms of social being. It is a curious commentary on the modern age that the influence of Marx on historians and sociologists has been far deeper than that of Hegel. It is

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true that Hegel appears to close options for all history while Marx closes them for the past only. It is also true that while Hegel banishes unreason from philosophy and admits it in history only as the 'cunning of reason', Marx locates unreason in superstructural reason and hence in what ultimately would be past history. Despite their contradiction, a certain dialectical complementarity between them cannot be denied. Hegel seeks to illumine the social being of an age by its Idea; Marx would enable us to see why social and intellectual changes cannot be fully understood from within the Idea and its innate dialectic. However, the thesis of economic determinism is hardly tenable because economic formations are never given independently of social consciousness. "They are in fact subjective-objective in character. . . Being and thought are two inevitably co-present dimensions." It is arguable that ideas do not spring from the head like 'Minerva in panoply' but appear to be correlated to a historically given state of social being; nevertheless this social being itself is discernible only through reflection over experience and as such is related to the self-awareness of the subject. "In particular the historian cannot discover social formations except as revealed in historical record which is directly expressive of some consciousness." Social being can only be reached in terms of the tradition of social experience and awareness. "In a

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profound sense, thus, while social structures underlie surface events, they are themselves inwardly constituted by a historical world of ideas." '*Manopubbaṅgamā dhammā*', all phenomena presuppose the prior activity of the mind.

Ideally knowledge is the self-sufficiency of being but when it is manifested through the finite mind and speech, it acquires the enigmatic character of a symbol which on the one hand points to an objective reference other than itself, and, on the other, to its own transcendent, non-objective and indeterminate but nonetheless indisputable reality. Knowledge is at once transcendental being, logical determination, psychological activity, social communion, and a directing motive force. The general idea of an age which constitutes its ground-perspective is a specific determination of reality, a specific self-determination of the *Zeitgeist* or *Yugadharma*. Since time is only 'the moving shadow of eternity', the ultimate source of the epochal manifestation of Truth must lie in the inscrutable will of God, '*yasya chāyāmṛtaṃ yasya mṛtyuḥ*'. This is not a counsel of despair or of acquiescence for those who must by their vocation 'fight without disquiet' (*Yuddhyasva vigatajvaraḥ*); it is only the recognition of the sovereign truth that "in His will is our peace". The actors which constitute society in an age are only occasions for the manifestation of what *Mahākāla* has already determined (*Nimittamātraṃ bhava Savyasācin*).

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It is worth recalling that while Max Scheler affirms the sociological character of all knowledge, he excludes from it its content and validity, holding that 'the *selection* of its objects' is according to 'the *ruling social interest perspective*', and that the 'forms' of the mental acts by which knowledge is own "are always and *necessarily sociologically* co-conditioned, i.e., by the structure of society." "If the *actualization* of the *ideas* generated in a society was determined by the *prevailing material conditions*, the selection of these objects of knowledge was determined by the *prevailing interest perspectives* of the ruling social group."

It is to be noted that Scheler rejects the positivistic rejection of all knowledge except positive knowledge. He accepts religion, metaphysics and positive science as three distinct types of knowledge depending on three permanent types of mental attitudes. Their specific categories, however, presuppose the 'relatively natural world view' of the group within which they develop. The sociological determinism of knowledge here, thus, is partly psychological-phenomenological, partly ethnic-historical. The discovery of the 'relatively natural world view' would depend on the interpretation of conventions, opinions and assumptions.

However, if the content and validity of knowledge are excluded from the scope of sociological determinism,

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what is left for determination is the direction of cognitive enquiry along with its presuppositions and modes of specific or overarching conceptualization. Researches in the history of ideas certainly throw light on specific instances of the influence of social structure and praxis on the structuring of knowledge but as in other areas of historical enquiry no general laws of determination or universal patterns can be discovered. The attempt to formulate such general laws or patterns tends to produce speculative exaggeration acceptable only to those already moved by congruent prejudice or preconceptions. Besides, even if knowledge arises in a suitable context of *effective social interest*, its validity depends only on its internal context and this confers on it universal relevance. Social conditions are indeed 'occasions' rather than 'causes' or are causes in the sense in which the Buddhists speak of *Kāraṇa-hetu* comprising all those extraneous factors which facilitate the effect by not hindering it.

The central thrust of the sociology of knowledge, however, must remain in its power to enable us to distinguish between the structurally different social conditions conducive to error or truth. Thus Comte and Marx claim to be able to distinguish between the social ages of illusion and that of scientific truth. Mannheim's theory of ideology has the same claim, though his theory of total

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ideology would necessarily raise a question about the veridical status of his own theory. For him particular ideologies may be regarded "as concealments, falsifications, or lies" but the integrity of the *mental structure* of the subject *in its totality* is not thereby attacked.

This total structure or ideology assumes different forms and aspects in the course of social development. Since ideology has the suspicion of falsehood, Mannheim would prefer the use of the term 'perspective'. For him while relating knowledge to diverse perspectives, the sociology of knowledge still escapes mere relativism by adopting relationism which "does not signify that there are no criteria of rightness and wrongness in a discussion" but only that certain assertions "cannot be formulated absolutely, but only in terms of the perspective of a given situation." In fact, he goes on to suggest that sociological analysis is "by no means irrelevant for the determination of the truth of a statement."

However, the attempt to avoid relativism while establishing the social determinism of knowledge puts Mannheim in a bind on the question of epistemology. The problem is in effect the old Kantian one of reconciling the universality and necessity of knowledge with its empirical origins. If not merely the content but the form of knowledge too is empirically determined as the sociologist of knowledge

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seems to contend, there could be no escape from relativism and ultimately from scepticism except by some form of dogmatism.

Popper has argued that the epistemology of *Wissenssoziologie* is derived from Hegel under the influence of Marx. Kant had sought to rebut the empiricist doubts of Hume by formulating the theory of a priori categories which Hegel extended and connected with history. The sociology of knowledge extends the context of history and formulates not one logic but many total ideologies. Popper criticizes the sociology of knowledge not only for its self-destructive implications but for misunderstanding the nature of the scientific method which is intersubjective, publicly testable and critically open-ended. Scientific knowledge is corrigible and progressive and evolves its own categories in the light of growing experience as illustrated by the fact that the commonsense or Aristotelian categories of space and time, substance and causality have undergone a sea-change in the interval between Newton and Einstein.

Actually Popper's criticism of the sociology of knowledge attacks only one aspect of it, viz., the impression it gives that science is imprisoned within some total ideology. On the other hand, scientific development with its changing categories arising in the context of capitalism and the Commercial and Industrial Revolutions goes far to

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strengthen the basic thesis of the sociology of knowledge. Popper's views are themselves grounded in the same *Weltanschauung* as the tradition of the sociology of knowledge.

If man is reduced to being a purely social phenomenon devoid of transcendental ground or essence, his knowledge of himself would presumably be perfected in a science of society. By its very assumptions such a science would also be a science of thought, true or false, as a socially dependent phenomenon. Such a social science or sociology of knowledge, then must be a fundamental part of the science of society. However, since as knowledge it would be included within its own object of study, it would also be necessarily self-reflexive. In seeking to explain away or debunk traditional religion, metaphysics and ethics or in seeking to applaud, defend or help plan the growth of natural science, the sociologist of knowledge must give an adequate account of his own special discipline as a branch of knowledge. Such an account would require epistemological and ontological determinations. These philosophical determinations would be required to validate the sociology of knowledge and hence they could not themselves be a part of its systematic principles. These philosophical pre-suppositions would then have to be regarded either as absolute and self-evident principles or as the conclusions of

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some other higher order science. In every case they would be an object of study for *Wissenssoziologie*. Nevertheless being itself grounded in a specific *Weltanschauung*, viz., of scientific humanism, *Wissenssoziologie* could only be described as an ideology of the modern age.

With his accustomed thoroughness Prof. Saran has analyzed the assumptions and implications of the sociology of knowledge and succeeded in showing conclusively that they are involved in inescapable logical difficulties. Any careful reader of his work, should be motivated thereby to search for tradition as the permanent lighthouse of truth covered by the mists of time. What Prof. Saran has accomplished is a rare act of service to the cause of tradition, a profound dedication.

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Epigraph

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ONE

There is only one virtue, one heroism, one sanctity, and that is sincerity; the sincerity of faith, the one and only faith.

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TWO

Transgression is essentially non-conformity of action; and as Knowledge alone can deliver from the bonds of action, it alone can definitively eliminate the very possibility of transgression.

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THREE

Possibility alone being absolute, every impossibility has a limit marked by a possibility that seems to belie it, whence the adage: "The exception proves the rule."

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FOUR

Man is a thinking being, and he cannot evade thought; and "in the beginning was the Word."

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FIVE

Every truth can have incalculable consequences, and on the spiritual plane no truth can be inopportune in an absolute fashion.

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The distinctive attitude of "knowledge" is discernment between the Real and the unreal; the unitive attitude is concentration on That which I am in reality, identity with That which I am.

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SEVEN

The reason for being of the expression *creatio ex nihilo* is to deny the pantheistic or deistic idea of a *creatio ex mundo.*

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Part One

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The discontinuity between knowledge and being, concept and reality, thinking and living is the key problem to which Sociology of Knowledge is an answer at the supra-individual level. The nature of Sociology of Knowledge thus differs fundamentally from what have been called special sociologies. Sociology of Religion (or Sociologies of Music, Art, Literature, et al.) is not necessarily itself a kind of religion (just as Sociologies of Music, Art or Literature are not themselves music, art or literature—except in the general sense that all writing is an art and constitutes a kind of literature). Sociology of Knowledge, inescapably, is itself knowledge. In other words, it is necessarily a self-referring or reflexive, regressive discipline. It follows that Sociology of Knowledge has to build into itself the most "advanced" or "scientific" epistemology; alternatively, it must presuppose a cognate epistemology that requires and makes it possible.

The self-referring, reflexive character of any sociology of knowledge has far-reaching consequences, some of which will be considered in the course of this Essay largely in an oblique manner. Since sociology does not and, given the basic ideas of modern thought, cannot recognize any level or order of reality and thinking higher to the supra-individual realm, the reflexive nature of Sociology of Knowledge becomes crucial to its problematics and validity. There is therefore a kind of built-in temptation to deny or

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rule out, *ab initio*, self-reference or infinite reflexivity. We may therefore begin with an examination of a sociology of knowledge which implicitly rejects or precludes the problem of self-reference.

We may refer to Werner Stark's distinction between the theory of ideology and Sociology of Knowledge properly so-called. This is in contradistinction to Mannheim's conception, particularly to his view that Sociology of Knowledge develops from the Marxian theory of ideology by a process of generalizing and extending its logic, method and scope: or, in Mannheim's own words, the total conception of ideology leads to Sociology of Knowledge.

Mannheim, however, draws a rather unclear distinction between the total or generalized theory of ideology and Sociology of Knowledge (properly so-called). But he does think that the theory of ideology is an integral part of this new discipline. Stark attempts to eliminate it altogether; this, as he rightly observes, is central to an understanding of Sociology of Knowledge. His view needs a close look.

According to Stark, the decisive difference between the theory of ideology and Sociology of Knowledge is that: "The former deals with a mode of thinking which is thrown off its proper course, the latter with all modes of thinking, and especially with those which form the intellectual

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framework of our whole world-view and which exist long before any falsifying interest-begotten tendency can assert itself. If all men could and would come to control their subconscious and rise superior to the insinuations of selfish or sectional interests, the doctrine of ideology would die off, because there would be no more raw material left in the contemporary world for it to study. But the sociology of knowledge would be as important as before. No society can see the vastness of reality at the same time from all conceivable angles; only the divine mind can be imagined to be capable of this possibility; every society must take up some concrete vantage-point from which to survey the broad—the unbounded—acres of that which is, and every society will therefore have its own particular picture of reality because it sees reality, and must see it, in one particular perspective. The thesis of the sociology of knowledge is that the choice of the vantage-point from which the *ens universale* is envisaged, depends in every concrete society on the human relationships which make that society what it is; but it is not asserted that selfish or sectional interests enter into the matter already at the point where the fundamental vision first springs into being. That they may come in later on and assert themselves is not to be denied; but that is an entirely different problem. The sociology of knowledge does not deal with warped thought; rather it deals with the crystallization or 'concretization' of thought in the

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sense that countless different constructions and interpretations of reality are in principle equally possible, while only one of them can be implemented and elaborated at any one time, and the selection of the one out of the many is, in its submission, always so made that a mental universe emerges which will fit in with the pattern of human relationships characteristic and constitutive of the society concerned."[1]

Stark is of course fully aware that this comes very close to Mannheim's well-known distinction between the Particular-evaluative and the Total-non-evaluative theories of ideology. The latter is synonymous with Sociology of Knowledge. Stark, however, is keen to avoid what he regards as the confusion between Sociology of Knowledge and the total theory of ideology, which he calls pan-ideologism.

If Stark's distinction is valid, one gets rid of the logical weaknesses in the foundations of Sociology of Knowledge. Hence, a careful examination of this view is required for clarification of the logical status of Sociology of Knowledge.

In the cited passage the following points have been made:

(i) The theory of ideology relates to an accident of human knowledge, however universal, whereas Sociology

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of Knowledge deals with an essential condition of all human knowledge.

(ii) The theory of ideology indicates and analyzes the distortion of the perspective whereas Sociology of Knowledge concerns itself with the specificity of the perspective.

(iii) The theory of ideology deals with the validity of thought whereas Sociology of Knowledge is concerned with the "crystallization" of thought (in a specially defined sense of the word to be indicated in the discussion that follows). Let us examine each point *seriatim*:

As to the first point, we are highly skeptical of the validity of universal contra-factual conditionals in the form used in his argument: "If all men could and would come to control their subconscious . . ." Now, how can one identify such a situation? How will it differ from the contrary situation in which no one could control his subconscious?— Such arguments ignore the crucial difference between the logic of "Some" and the logic of "All".

From another point of view, however, it may be said that the force of this argument lies in the assertion that the "determination" by the subconscious can be *thought away* whereas the situational (structural) and perspectival determination cannot be even thought away. (In other words, the former represents an anthropological impossibility, the latter a logical one.) Stark does not

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elaborate his grounds for this difference. It seems clear, however, that he argues somewhat as follows: the ideological distortions are particular distortions and hence there is no logical impossibility in positing a state when all distortions will be removed; on the other hand, the social determination represents the general condition of all knowledge and hence it is logically inseparable from it. In other words, ideological elements represent defects or limitations of individual thinkers and not of thinking as such.

Now in the first place, it is important to be clear about the meaning of this distinction. For instance, one cannot think without language or in a language without syntax. This is a characteristic of thinking as such and not a limitation of the thinker. But what does control of "subconscious" mean? Does it mean that the subconscious is not a necessary layer of the human mind so that some thinkers are influenced by it while others are not? This is clearly not so, since those who put forward this idea also maintain that the conscious, the unconscious and the subconscious are the necessary divisions of the human psyche. The hypothesis that all men could be in full control of their subconscious amounts, in other words, to the abolition of the concept of the subconscious (and the unconscious) and this means a fundamental change in the structure of man's mind—whatever such a radical reform of man's mind may mean. If this is what Stark intends, it is

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pertinent to ask as to why the social or situational determinations too cannot be overcome. There may be two reasons for this: one, that the influence of the "subconscious" (and sectional interests) operates on the individual plane whereas the social determination operates on the collective plane. And two, that the subconscious, after all, conditions only the individual mind, but social determination refers to the universal conditions of knowledge—conditions arising from the spatio-temporality of existence, and hence even a reformed "all-conscious" mind will have to function under these very conditions and to that extent be subject to them. (The second, it will be seen, is the more basic argument of which the first may even be regarded as only a corollary.)

It is characteristic of Stark that while speaking of the ideological doctrine he speaks in terms of individual thinkers, but the very next moment, when he comes to Sociology of Knowledge, he changes the terminology and talks of "society": "No society can see the vastnesses of reality at the same time from all conceivable angles . . ." etc. This is surprising, for the statement means precisely nothing unless the word "society" is taken as a summary term standing for all individual members of a given human group. But when thus interpreted it presents the same difficulty: why should we suppose that the individual can transcend his subconscious, attain complete mastery of his mind, go

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beyond the collective unconscious—if that concept is admitted—but cannot transcend the limitations of his situation? The only answer is the second argument mentioned above, viz., that these limitations are necessary in the sense that they arise from the temporality and finitude of the human condition. But this is obviously untenable; for the limitations and the distortions arising from the subconscious originate from the same source and cannot be overcome either individually or collectively without the abolition of time.

The other two points can be dealt with briefly. The specification or location of a perspective cannot be neatly distinguished from the distortion of the perspective. In the last analysis, a perspective other than one's own is scarcely distinguishable from a distorted one. There would be some room for this distinction if the concept of ideological thought had been defined only in terms of subconscious influences. Stark, however, adds sectional, or class interests also. Now, while it might somehow be possible to distinguish a perspective determined by the subconscious of a thinker from one determined by his social position, it seems impossible to differentiate between the latter and one determined by his class or sectional interest.

We are thus thrown back on the third distinction between the theory of ideology and Sociology of Knowledge. The social theory of knowledge according to

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Stark is concerned primarily with "concretization" or crystallization of thought and not with its validity. This is essentially the position of Scheler whose version of Sociology of Knowledge Stark generally accepts and tries to carry forward. By crystallization is meant, in fact, the specific theory of social knowledge which Stark has attempted to enunciate. Since we cannot examine that theory systematically at this point, the full force of our criticism can be felt only towards the end of the Essay. Here let us examine the fundamental point of this theory:

There are certain axiological *a priori*. They are constitutive of human thought. An example of such an axiological *a priori* is the radical change in Man's attitude and the quality of his love towards Nature which occurred at the beginning of the modern age and which underlies the entire Modern World-view. Sociology of Knowledge will discover, analyze, and trace the necessary interrelations between this world-view and society. As Stark himself aptly puts it, "the sociology of knowledge deals with the formation of a specific world-view, the doctrine of ideology with its deformation . . ."[2]

Now the distinction between the formation and deformation of a specific world-view is beset with serious difficulties. We shall not raise the problem of finding the value-standard, the "grammar" or "logic", according to which a world-view will be judged as (well) formed or

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deformed. Assuming that this can be done, the next question is: What are the implications of the deformation of a world-view? It should be clear that a deformed world-view is still a world-view, and not part of one. Historically, therefore, it can arise only after the well-formed world-view has disintegrated and disappeared. Now, in relation to knowledge and thought its role will externally be the same as that of a world-view proper. Since the central task of Sociology of Knowledge in Stark's version is not the discovery and critique of these world-views, but the investigation of its relation with the knowledge and social relations of that epoch, the distinction between Sociology of Knowledge and a theory of ideology which studies a deformed world-view is not tenable on this ground.

The other possibility is that the deformed world-view coexists with a world-view proper. In this case also, one cannot maintain a distinction between Sociology of Knowledge and the theory of ideology; for in so far as the study of a world-view, an "*a priori*" axiological system, necessarily includes the study of its changes and variants, the theory of ideology becomes its integral part. All that Stark can take as demonstrated is that the theory of ideology does not constitute the whole of Sociology of Knowledge.

It may be said, however, that the words formation and deformation stand not for types of structures, but for processes. We did not discuss this possibility because this

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leads to even worse results. If the deformation is a process that goes on after a certain time when a world-view has been formed, the unavoidable result of this process will be to disintegrate and finally destroy it. Two possibilities are there. Either a new process of the formation of a world-view will start or the deforming process itself will crystallize into a world-view (excluding, of course, the possibility of a complete vacuum). If deformation is regarded as a process leading towards the dissolution of an existing world-view, it becomes a necessary step in the formation of the next world-view—and not merely in a formal, dialectical but also in a sociological sense, for the set of social relationships that leads to the dissolution of an existing world-view would also be favourable to the reception of the one that replaces the dissolved one. This remains true even if the replacing world-view is not made up of the deformed ideas.

It is not unlikely, however, that Stark would regard this whole discussion as a misunderstanding on our part. Perhaps his main point is that the theory of ideology dealing with distortions is essentially a psychological discipline and hence should be distinguished from Sociology of Knowledge which should both be sociological and deal with knowledge not error.

A world-view means a system of ideas mostly at a very high level of abstraction in terms of which the entire life (experience and action) and thought of man are organized. It

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is natural that in any human group it should have universal acceptance, implicit or explicit. This is, however, not logically necessary and a world-view remains a *world-view* whether accepted by one man, the entire group or a minority or no one at a given time. Now Stark thinks that ideological thinking (and hence the deformation of a world-view) concerns certain individuals. This is quite clear from his illustration of the coincidence in the views of Plato and Pareto on change. He tries to show that, contrary to appearances, this coincidence in one of the basic aspects of their thought is psychological and not sociological. We shall not scrutinize this particular example; instead, we shall urge a fundamental logical argument. If the misunderstanding of reality or a world-view (Stark's shift from world-view to reality is itself significant) is in the minds of some individuals and concerns them only, it is certainly correct to hold that it should be the concern of abnormal psychology—since these distortions of the consciousness are, *ex hypothesi*, marginal to the society in which they occur. For two reasons, however, this cannot be regarded as a correct representation of the situation. One is that in so far as the sociologist of thought would not normally be concerned with the thought of those who show neither extraordinary intellectual power nor wide influence, it follows that the distortions are social phenomena by virtue either of their (symbolic) significance or of their general acceptance and

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influence, or both. The second and more fundamental reason is that a world-view is the foundation of an individual's thinking—nay, of his very experience. Distortion in the very foundation cannot be merely an individual defect; misunderstanding of a world-view, as distinguished from failure to understand or partial understanding, involves the falsification of one's entire consciousness. Barring the cases where this is plainly pathological, which is certainly not the concern of the theory of ideology, this means that the causes of such deformation can never be individual. Global factors—though often incipient—always underlie the occurrence of such a phenomenon. Stark himself provides for this development when he describes the process of ideology-formation in terms of subconscious influences. Once these are admitted it is arbitrary not to admit the collective unconscious, since, as we have just seen, the understanding of a world-view is never an exclusively individual affair. Marx and Mannheim were thus profoundly right in recognizing in the phenomenon of "false consciousness" the fundamental problem of what they called the theory of Ideology and Sociology of Knowledge respectively.

It should, however, be equally clear that within the framework of fundamental principles of Marx—which is shared by Weber, Mannheim, and Stark—no solution of the problem is possible. In fact, the very concept of "false

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consciousness" is an anomaly in such a system: Stark must have seized on this fact. This is the reason why he is so keen on excluding the theory of ideology from Sociology of Knowledge—thus eliminating from the very start the problem of false consciousness.

However, this attempt does not succeed. Having examined Stark's conception of Sociology of Knowledge as distinguished from a generalized theory of ideology, we may now look at some positive aspects of his theoretization.

In the first place, he holds that behind divergent attitudes and thought-systems there are some "ultimate common fundamentals of thought" and it is these which properly speaking should be the concern of Sociology of Knowledge.[3] Now in what sense is the study of these sociological? The study of ideas and their basic presuppositions is a logico-dialectical investigation: the sociological element can enter here as the genetic explanation of these "common fundamentals of thought". Alternatively, they (ideas) may be regarded as the correlate of a social system. It will be readily seen that if the entrance of metatheoretical elements into knowledge be regarded as the essence of Sociology of Knowledge, only the first view is admissible. Stark's system of concepts, however, is open to a serious objection: since the world-view or the ultimate common fundamentals of thought are constitutive of the system of social relationships, the latter cannot be used to

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explain the genesis (or validity) of the world-view. Stark, accordingly, it seems, emphasizes the second aspect. But here, too, there are serious difficulties beneath the smooth surface, though these have been carefully sorted out and examined in the latter part of his Treatise. Even so, the basic objection is that if the two are independent and parallel, Sociology of Knowledge is either a descriptive discipline, or the connections discovered by it are just imputed; for if they are real, Sociology of Knowledge is itself an overarching system to which no social system is correlated.

The true nature of these difficulties comes out clearly when we consider the specific instance Stark gives of the subject matter of Sociology of Knowledge. Following Max Scheler, he thinks that modern social organization as also all modern thought originates from a fundamental shift in man's attitude towards Nature: ". . . the most classical expression and applications of the theory we owe to the genius of Max Scheler. His prime example is the origin of the modern world-view—that inclusive thought-structure which has been the basis of all realistic thinking since the Renaissance, and which, as Scheler has shown, has sprung from an underlying, *a priori* will- and value-structure centred upon the desire to dominate the material world. 'A sociological law of knowledge which comes to the surface in the origin of modern science,' he [Scheler] writes, 'is . . . the way in which the amateur comes before the expert, dilettantism

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before scientific bureaucracy, love before knowledge. Each new objective realm which science has conquered in her history, has had first to be seized in an access of affection: only then could there supervene an age of sober and intellectually more objective research. A new natural science presupposes for this reason a new feeling for nature—a new valuation of nature. This emotional break-through takes place in the European renaissances beginning with the renaissance of the Franciscan movement (which is still wholly tied to the terms of Christianity) and its successors, but becoming more and more secularized (Telesio, Campanella, Leonardo, Petrarch, Giordano Bruno, Spinoza, Shaftesbury, Fénélon up to Rousseau). . . . It would be an erroneous interpretation of the forces which have overcome the anthropomorphism of the medieval world-view to regard them only, or even primarily, so far as time-order is concerned, as the outcome of rational thinking. To think—that is precisely what the Schoolmen could do more acutely and sharply, more artfully and methodically than the bulk of all the modern generations of scientists. Initially, it was rather an orgiastic and ecstatic, emotional surrender to nature and a new experiential attitude which brought an opening-up of the mind towards the world . . . which led beyond bookish knowledge and narrow anthropomorphism . . . .'

"This new love of nature which, in contradiction of the well-known adage, made men attentive to her true

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character, rather than blind to it, was not like the Christian *agape* which demands the passive surrender of the lover to the loved one, but resembled rather the heathen *eros* with its active desire to appropriate, to have and to hold her. For this reason domination became the decisive axiological element, the central value-attitude, from which the study of reality was undertaken, and which, in the fullness of time, was to lead to the integral modern world-view."[4]

We have quoted at length in order to give a fair idea of what Stark thinks to be the essence of Sociology of Knowledge. This was all the more essential in view of the fact that we have devoted considerable space to what the presentation of Sociology of Knowledge is *not* according to him.

To any careful reader who is not already convinced about the matter, this account will look highly unsatisfactory and will raise a number of important difficulties. In the first place, he will notice that the above statement is not wholly consistent with what is said before: that certain "common fundamentals of thought" were the proper concern of Sociology of Knowledge. From the later passage, however, it will appear that the study of certain emotional mutations and consequent emergence of value-structures is its proper subject matter. This does not go well with the earlier statement because these emotional "breakthroughs" and *a priori* axiological elements, are admittedly neither thought

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nor rational. However, it may be held that Sociology of Knowledge is more concerned with the fundamentals of thought than with emotional shifts through which they crystallize. This will not settle the issue and Sociology of Knowledge, on this account, will have to be centrally concerned with the "emotional", "irrational forces" behind "common fundamentals of thought" on pain of being indistinguishable from a pure (or idealistic) history of ideas. This in other words means that Sociology of Knowledge has to be based on a history of human consciousness. This history, if we accept Scheler's ideas as adopted by Stark, will have to be at the same time, a history of the human unconscious even though to us that is unintelligible except in the sense of a study of traditional symbols and archetypes: but that will not fit in with any modern conception of Sociology of Knowledge. If, on the other hand, this history and also the ensuing history of ideas is interpreted autonomously, theoretical sociology of knowledge is eliminated altogether. It will thus be seen that within a humanistic and tacitly positivistic frame of reference, the Scheler-Stark conception of Sociology of Knowledge cannot avoid being an investigation of the non-rational and (collective) unconscious roots and presuppositions of human thought. Stark is, of course, well-aware of the paradoxes and perplexities into which Marx and Mannheim (and Pareto) involved themselves by including the study of

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ideological thought in their purview. But it should be clear that Stark cannot avoid them merely by calling these non-rational emotional (or volitional) factors *a priori* axiological elements. For if *a priori* means independent of experience, then these volitional or emotional mutations are obviously not *a priori.* Nor are they in any way the principles without which the process of valuation cannot be even imagined or is not logically thinkable. Perhaps what is meant is that all modern valuations can be ultimately understood only in terms of the changed attitude to Nature; in other words, it is an *a priori* valuation in the sense that it is the ultimate common presupposition of all *modern* value systems.

But even this will not do. It is beset with a number of difficulties which cannot be easily brushed aside. Firstly, it is admitted that the change in man's attitude to Nature developed in opposition to the preceding non-modern (Traditional) attitude. It represents a point in a historical series. And hence there is no reason to call it the ultimate presupposition of our self-understanding. Whether or not it may be ultimately possible to give an intelligible answer to the question: Why does a change in man's basic attitudes take place?—it is certainly not nonsensical to raise this question about the change from the ancient-traditional to the modern world-view—provided of course that tradition is at all credited with a "world-view" in today's usage. In fact, such a question has been asked and answered; and Stark

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himself, in the last analysis, assigns this very task to Sociology of Knowledge. Surprisingly, however, he does not adequately realize the implications.

The traditional "world-view" already envisages these fundamental changes in human consciousness; it has a systematic theory to aid its understanding, namely, the theory according to which these changes are, in the last analysis, levels of theoretic consciousness, and represent a dialectic of knowledge and modes of its obscuration. The fundamental principle underlying this view is admitted even by Stark when he speaks of an axiological system. It would be strange if an axiological system, however axiomatic, were not a system of knowledge. In fact, Scheler's antithesis between love and knowledge denies the concept of an *a priori* axiology; in any case it already presupposes a theory according to which the proposition, "Love is a form of knowledge" or "Love is a cognitive virtue" is false. One is thus faced with the problem of self-reference of Sociology of Knowledge (and the consequent doubt whether a "sociology" of knowledge is possible)—a problem which traditional thought straightly recognizes and answers. Stark sidesteps this crucial problem by considering another instead. As if aware of his implicit confusion between a theory of the primacy of the will (or life) and an *a priori* axiological system (*sans* Supratemporal reference) he asks: "If knowledge is indeed, as we have asserted, genetically

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connected with a pre-existent axiological or value-system, are not its sources hopelessly contaminated in consequence? Must not the presence of any value (or 'ought'-conception) bar the way to truth, prejudice our pursuit of the truth (or our conception of the 'Is')? Is not value-determined knowledge—paradoxically—value-less?"

He then goes on to assert: "Happily, we can answer this question (which has led people like Karl Mannheim into considerable difficulties) with a most emphatic negative. Our sociology of knowledge assumes the necessity of certain pre-judgments with regard to the relative importance or unimportance of the numberless separable and eligible strands of objective reality, pre-judgments without which the constitution of a determinate and manageable object of knowledge out of the indeterminate and immeasurable materials of knowledge would not be possible; but it does not assert the necessity—indeed, it manifestly suggests the non-necessity—of prejudices."[5]

In support of this general "emphatic" answer, Stark adds three specific arguments: "Firstly, the values which the sociology of knowledge sees established at the basis of our own, or any other, concrete world-view, are objective values, value-facts, not subjective valuations. They are given in and by the life of the society concerned and exist and are operative before any individual member of that society can ever possibly form or assert any private prejudice of his

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own. They inhere in and help to constitute the basic pattern of human interaction at the time and place in question, and have for the individual that externality and objectivity which Durkheim rightly claims to be one of the hallmarks of social fact.

"Secondly, and more importantly, though the axiological system determines *what* is to be selected from the materials of knowledge for inclusion in the objects or object of knowledge, it does not and cannot determine, *how* this selection is to be carried out."

"Thirdly and lastly, our sociology of knowledge, properly handled, can lead to an objectivity in the treatment of social and historical reality incomparably deeper than any achieved or attainable by those who deny the existence and the influence of a basic axiological layer in the human mind."[6]

If the above defence of his position is examined with the minute care and logical rigour due to formulations of a scholar of Stark's caliber, one comes up against a series of complications. First, it is not clear whether the "numberless separable and eligible strands of objective reality" are "separable" and "eligible" and "objective" by virtue of the "pre-judgments with regard to relative importance or unimportance" or whether they have these qualities intrinsically. The former alternative will mean that these "pre-judgments" are the basic categorical forms of our

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cognitive process. If they are one and the same for all peoples and ages and constitutive of social life, they cannot evidently be identical with the axiological *a priori* with which Sociology of Knowledge deals. But this will render the "axiological layer" wholly arbitrary, in which case a fresh set of "pre-judgments" will be required to explain the formation of this axiological layer; and even if it (the axiological layer) is held to be a kind of self-generating "substance", the question of its relation with the "pre-judgments" will have to be settled.

On the other hand, if the "pre-judgments" represent the "axiological layer in the human mind" and are culture-bound, a relativity is introduced in the very heart of the cognitive process. Perhaps this kind of relativism is admitted by Stark, for he regards it as quite harmless (he commends Scheler's theory of the relatively "natural" world-view). But he has not been able to provide any logical argument for the *ens universale* which the differing and even conflicting world-views certainly imply if they are to be meaningful but for which the method and presuppositions of Sociology of Knowledge (even in Scheler's version) leave no logical room whatsoever. The knowledge of the alternative world-view must be transcendental, but this problem Stark simply ignores. His other three points are still more difficult to understand. He says that the values which form the basis of a world-view are "objective"; they are not

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simply values but "value-facts". It is only fair to assume that this is another way of putting the idea of an axiological *a priori*. We have examined it already. Does this alternative formulation clarify it any further? The best construction, we should think, is to understand it to mean that these "values" represent not individual but collective evaluations. It will also seem that, in an important sense, they are unconscious too. This is the only way perhaps of understanding Stark's idea when he draws a distinction between prejudice and prejudgment—two words whose etymology is the same. It is obvious that prejudice here means an individualized prejudgment.

The alternative interpretation is to think in terms of the eternal truth and its temporal manifestations and modalities. This indeed seems to be the model for Stark's own thinking. But he never commits himself to it; on the contrary, he is anxious all along to avoid it. At the same time he does not like to make his sociology of knowledge a study of hidden distortions of thought, though repeatedly his positions lead us to a point where it is practically synonymous with the study of collective unconscious forces.

Stark obviously holds that whatever is not individual or is supra-individual is social—a fallacy he inherits from Durkheim. But the collective—the Mass and the public—are not individual phenomena, they are supra-individual. And yet it is accepted that a Mass, a crowd is not a society. A

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distortion does not cease to be one by being collective, or public.

It is this false identification of the social with the collective that should explain the very odd position which Stark takes when he says that the values at the basis of a world-view are constitutive of the pattern of human interaction though it is the same human interaction which throws them up. And further, while they are themselves the product of this interaction, they are the ultimate guiding principles for articulating knowledge of reality.

The study of world-views and their formation emerges as the essence of Sociology of Knowledge. Curiously, Stark tends to avoid ontological and methodological questions. That is, such questions as: Is there an absolute of which the divergent world-views are modalities? What is the status of the knowledge that comprises the understanding of all world-views? Is it not self-referring? Is such universal knowledge possible at all? But these are the questions that such a view necessarily raises.

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Part Two

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It is in Mannheim that we find an attempt to grapple with these crucial questions.

Mannheim recognizes that the attitude implicit in the sociological views of knowledge must itself be part of a world-view. Accordingly, Sociology of Knowledge cannot arise and get influential before the formation of a specific world-view. In a remarkable essay entitled. "The Problem of a Sociology of Knowledge", he applies the principles and techniques of Sociology of Knowledge to itself and expressly formulates his objections to the Schelerian conception of Sociology of Knowledge (which Stark represents). It is quite clear that the study of basic modes of consciousness, world-views, ultimate presuppositions of thought, or "axiological *a priori*", cannot be the essence of Sociology of Knowledge, since, as we have shown, this can always be done from radically divergent points of view. Mannheim, therefore, rightly sees that what is of the essence is the loss of autonomy to the realm of thought and knowledge. The same idea he expresses from a slightly different point of view by saying that Sociology of Knowledge rejects the possibility of any immanent history of ideas. The autonomy and immanence of the realm of thought should not be understood in an absolute sense. Mannheim is careful to recognize that in many traditional thought systems, thought is not given an ultimate position. The difference between the traditional and the modern relativistic view of

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thought, does not lie in the fact that the former absolutizes while the latter relativizes thought. It lies, as Mannheim correctly puts it, in the different conception of "that ontological sphere of central importance in respect of which thought can be considered as relative or dependent. As we have said, such a centre can never be excogitated; it will always shift into that sphere of life in which the systematizing thinker as a practical subject lives most intensely. In earlier times, subjects who transcended thought 'lived' in revealed religion, in ecstasy, and so on; during the last, contemporary stage of the evolution of consciousness, however, the characteristic thing was that the sense of reality became more and more concentrated upon the historic and social sphere, and that in this sphere, the economic factor was felt to be the central one."[7]

But even this is not sufficient to characterize adequately the difference between the traditional and the modern view of the relativity of thought. For the new ontological reference, the social-historic sphere, can still be viewed either from a static or a dynamic standpoint. "Now it is characteristic of modern historical thought that it considers its last point of reference—in this case, Being—simultaneously also as something dynamic and 'becoming'. Not only 'ideas', but also the 'Being' on which they are seen to depend, must be recognized as something dynamic—the

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more so as, for those who have insight, their own standpoint, too, is undergoing constant change."[8]

In other words, Sociology of Knowledge is an integral part of what Mannheim calls the self-relativization and self-transcendence of thought which is a major expression of modern man's urge to absolute relativity. (This looks like, but is not the same as the effort to relativize the absolute; it is, in fact, just the opposite; the effort to absolutize the relative.) As Mannheim very pertinently notes, the new Absolute is a comprehensive evolutionary process of which both ideas and existence are components.

Mannheim rightly holds that the proper significance of Sociology of Knowledge lies in its attempt to solve the problems that arise from the self-relativization of thought. We shall, therefore, select the key problems and examine the main lines of their solution, including that proposed by Mannheim himself.

Before proceeding, let us explain the relevance of our long critique of Stark's views.

Stark has attempted to eliminate the problems of ideological thought by reducing it to individual *versus* collective bias; by this device he has managed to avoid the crucial problem of relativity *versus* autonomy of thought. In the same way, by equating psychology with the individual (private), the subjective, and sociology with the collective, he tries to preclude the other fundamental problem, viz., that of

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false consciousness, or more generally, of changes in the modes of human consciousness. The aim of our critique, accordingly, has been to show that any such attempt cannot—and Stark's could not—succeed. Positively we wanted to show that it is not Stark's but Mannheim's approach which goes to the heart of the matter and provides the correct context for understanding traditional and modern formulations and solutions of this problem.

As we have just seen, the central problem of Sociology of Knowledge arises in connection with the understanding of ideas. Since as a rule ideas are about reality the problems of knowledge of reality and also of truth and validity are necessarily connected with it. On this point, there is broad agreement among the sociologists of knowledge. We may then formulate the question as follows: Is an immanent or autonomous history of ideas possible? This Mannheimian formulation takes care not only of the Marxian and the Schelerian versions but also of the Parsonsian approach which proceeds in terms of the trichotomy of Personality, Society and Culture, making the relation between the last two (society and culture) the main problem area of Sociology of Knowledge.

Let us have a brief look at the key dimensions of this question.

First, the logical aspect. An autonomous history of ideas is logically required for the following considerations:

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(i) The history of thought is distinguished from any other history in this that the object of historiography and its medium are the same. In other words, the objects (ideas, knowledge, thought) of this history are the products of the same activity whereby they are recorded and interpreted. History of ideas is thus necessarily a reflexive activity. Another aspect is this: it has not been unquestionably established that all historiography is a reliving of the past; at best it is a theory with a great deal of truth. On the other hand, it is obvious that no history of ideas is possible without understanding; the historian cannot even begin his work without rethinking the ideas of which he plans a history. The rethinking is, of course, not always and necessarily, a reliving of the cogitations of the historical personage with whom the ideas or thought may be said to have originated; but the idea as such, regardless of how any particular person thought it, has to be rethought in order that history may be possible at all.

(ii) Even though thought is usually and very largely (though by no means always) about some extra-mental reality, any direct comparison with reality is not possible. In order to understand an idea, we have necessarily to compare it with another idea of reality, and thus again it becomes a history of ideas and their relations.

(iii) It may be held that the simple objection to the autonomy of thought is the change in the conditions in which

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a system of thought evolves. For example, Hannah Arendt speaks of three fundamental changes or revolutions in thought in modern times. First, when Marx reverses the role of labour and speculation; then second, when Nietzsche turns tradition upside down by his leap from the abstract realm of ideas into the realm of senses; and third, Kierkegaard who carried doubt into the very heart of religion by making religiousness a matter of leaping from doubt to Faith. Now these are changes in the realm of ideas and, as more than one analytical history of ideas has done (Arendt herself, or Lovejoy), it can be shown how these changes followed one another purely from the logic of the dominant ideas. But at the same time it is also admitted that the problems with which these thinkers were trying to cope were not purely theoretical, if ever there are any. They are problems created by the Reformation, the Industrial Revolution and so on. Now all this is quite obvious: but the perplexity arsises from the question of whether the Reformation, the Industrial, the Technological Revolutions were not also, and in an essential sense, changes in the ideas or systems of knowledge. Put more generally, man being a reflective being, no significant aspect of his life can be independent of thought and reason—in fact, it is difficult to conceive of significance purely in the material or factual realm. And if the changes to which thought systems are

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related themselves represent prior changes in thought or knowledge, thought once again emerges as autonomous.

At this stage it will naturally be pointed out that thought and life may be aspects of a comprehensive whole comprising both. This was the ancient view; and this, in fact, is the substance of all sober formulations of Sociology of Knowledge. But as Mannheim points out in the passage quoted at length above, the nature of this whole can be conceived in different ways. In other words, Sociology of Knowledge brings within the realm of thought that which had been placed outside it. This is at once both— panlogism and relativism: Panlogism, because the nature of the "whole" is made dependent upon the modes of conceiving it: what is originally unthinkable now becomes accessible to analysis. It thus constitutes an assertion of the absolute supremacy of thought. At the same time it is relativism, because the denial of the ineffable or thought-transcending character of the "Whole" humanizes and temporalizes it; what is originally placed outside human reason, is now relativized with respect to it and to human history. Mannheim's statement that being is conceived in terms of the sphere in which life is most intensely lived, goes to the heart of Sociology of Knowledge, for though it seeks to present a vitalistic view of thought and knowledge, the word "intensely" brings in the life of thought into the centre once again. (If the concept of intensity is not interpreted in terms of thought, it will become,

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in the last analysis, something ineffable or trivially sentimental.)

This argument may be thought a little far-fetched. The same conclusion can, however, be reached from a different angle. Mannheim's concept of "self-relativization" can be appreciated from two points of view. Sociology of Knowledge, as we pointed out early, is a knowledge, a body of thought. As such, it is itself to be analyzed sociologically. Mannheim does precisely this in his essay on "The Problem of a Sociology of Knowledge". But then, the results will again be a body of knowledge, hence amenable to the same analysis. In this way there will always remain an n+1 body of knowledge which will remain outside the scope of Sociology of Knowledge.

If this is dismissed as a non-historical point of view, there still remains a serious difficulty. An examination of the logical relation between knowledge and social existence will show that the changes in the latter, in the last analysis, have to be described as changes in the modes of consicousness. As we have shown in Part One, this will mean that Sociology of Knowledge has to be the history of human consciousness; in fact, that will be the only way to distinguish it (Sociology of Knowledge) from the usual historiography of ideas, which apart from chronicling ideas, investigates their internal dialectical relations and common presuppositions. At this level it no longer appears very

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significant to raise the question whether or not a history of consciousness implies a form of panpsychism or panlogism. The significant question at this level is: How is a study of different *Weltanschauungen* possible? This presents a problem because a basic, primordial, pre-experiential mode of consciousness defines a *Weltanschauung*. The basic problem here for the sociologist of knowledge may be put as follows: Does not the comparative study of different world-views, life-outlooks, modes (or stages) of consciousness, presuppose a transcendental consciousness, completely free of time and culture? And if such a presupposition is actually involved, how far is it consistent with the basic principles of modern sociology of knowledge?

Mannheim was keenly aware of these problems, and he has devoted an important and careful essay to the problem of the study of *Weltanschauung*. It will be useful to examine his views on this before dealing with the above questions.

Mannheim tries to establish two main things. One, that there is such a thing as a total world-view, life-outlook. And two, that this can be understood and analyzed scientifically. (Of course, it is not quite clear what precisely he means by "science" in this context but it is clear that he is thinking of something other than natural science.) Mannheim raises this difficulty or problem at the initial level; for him the theoretical possibility and validity of the concept of a "world-view", is in question. His main problem,

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therefore, is to show that there is such a thing as a total world-view in terms of which thought and action are to be understood and that it is amenable to scientific analysis and interpretation. This is certainly the crucial logical issue involved in studying ultimate presuppositions of thought-systems and dominant mentalities and in tracing the affiliation of ideas. The latter represents what is called the problem of Imputation. To the problem of grasping divergent and even conflicting world-views or total life-outlooks (*Weltanschauungen*), Mannheim comes only at a later stage.

We shall examine both the problems for they are crucial to Sociology of Knowledge.

With respect to the first problem the main point is stated by Mannheim as follows: "we know that something possessing aesthetic meaning is given to us when we approach the work of art in an aesthetic attitude, and something possessing religious meaning, when we experience the religious objectification in an attitude congruent with it; but is something else given to us in addition which we can designate as the *Weltanschauung*, the global outlook behind these objectifications? And if so, is there a specific attitude we have to adopt to grasp this new datum, an attitude different from those which enabled us to capture the original meanings? Can we describe the new type of intentional act corresponding to the new attitude?

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"Not until this question has been answered in the affirmative—and that can only be done by phenomenological analysis of the intentional acts directed towards cultural objects—shall we be in a position to tackle the second problem—that of the way in which contents grasped in a-theoretical experience can be transposed into theoretical, scientific terms."[9]

Mannheim answers both these questions in the affirmative. He gives a phenomenological analysis of the concept of "*Weltanschauung*" and distinguishes between cultural and natural objects with the help of his three-level theory of Meaning: the objective (representation), the expressive and the documentary.

We shall first consider some general difficulties involved here and then examine the distinction between the levels of meaning.

The first point is about the nature of this a-theoretical experience in which a *Weltanschauung* originates. Mannheim directly raises the question of the transposition or translation of this "a-theoretical experience" without giving serious consideration to its nature. There are two possibilities here. Firstly, that this experience is inchoate, confused, nebulous and the world-view is its gradual elaboration and development.

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The other construction is that it represents an intuitive participation in the transcendent wisdom of which the fully articulated world-view represents a temporalization.

Mannheim is certainly aware of this ambiguity in the term "a-theoretical experience". He says that it is something indeterminate, unformed and so on. *Weltanschauung*, he explicitly regards as a "germinal unity". He is also, accordingly, worried about the translation of this primordial experience into theoretical terms, suggesting that it may be inherently impossible. He writes, "The paradoxical nature of theoretical thought, distinguishing it from the other forms, consists in this, that it seeks to superimpose a logical, theoretical pattern upon experiences already patterned under other—for example aesthetic or religious—categories."[10]

Though Mannheim has not put it in so many words and though he writes throughout in the context of the antithesis between rationalism and irrationalism, he could not have been unaware that the real point concerns the nature of this "a-theoretical experience". If it were not this, and the original experience were simply something unformed and germinal, there would be no paradox in its subsequent development into a rational structure. It is, however, characteristic of modern thinking that it avoids the problem of clarifying the nature of this a-theoretical experience and immediately shifts to the question of irrational *versus* rational. This is the escape route chosen by Mannheim too.

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Let us pause for a moment to consider this question of irrationality. Supposing we consider it from the viewpoint of rationalism and pose the problem as that of rational comprehension of an irrational *Weltanschauung*. Assuming its possibility, the most important point will again be about the status or nature of irrationality. Is it a coordinate but opposite force to reason? If so, on what grounds do we hope for the final triumph of reason over unreason? Or, in any case, how can there be a possibility of an objective knowledge of the struggle or encounter between the two? For such a knowledge will involve not only self-interpretation of reason, but something far beyond it: since it includes the interpretation of a force independent of and alien to Reason. Other possibilities are to regard unreason,

(i) as a phase in the unfolding of Reason, or

(ii) as a manifestation of the subhuman.

In both the cases, the basic difficulty remains unresolved. In the first case, the question remains as to whether unreason is a necessary phase; and if so, whence its necessity? In the second case too, the problem is to know whether the subhuman represents a permanent or a merely historical, ephemeral aspect. The crux of the problem is that Reason cannot grasp unreason except when it is treated as a deviation or error. However, Sociology of Knowledge is not synonymous with a sociology of error.

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This will be borne out by a brief examination of Mannheim's method for the scientific study of *Weltanschauung*. His whole argument depends on the distinction he draws between three types of meaning: the objective, the expressive and the documentary. Once it is shown that in every cultural product a documentary meaning reflecting a global outlook is given, we have the basic guarantee that *Weltanschauung* and documentary meaning are capable of scientific investigation.

Now what is the documentary meaning of a cultural product? The example—giving alms to a beggar on the street—which Mannheim takes for the analysis of these three strata of meanings is wholly inept and will not stand scrutiny. Hence we shall disregard it and examine only the formal statement he makes about this distinction: "Whereas objective interpretation is concerned with grasping a completely self-contained complex of meaning—pervading the 'representation' of the subject-matter as well as the 'shaping' of the medium—which is ascertainable from the work alone as such, expressive meaning, as we have seen, points beyond the work and requires an analysis of the artist's stream of psychic experience. Now documentary meaning is akin to expressive meaning in that it requires us constantly to look beyond the work; here, too, we are concerned with the man behind the work—but in an entirely different sense. Expressive meaning has to do with a cross-

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section of the individual's experiential stream, with the exploration of a psychic process which took place at a certain time; documentary meaning, on the other hand, is a matter, not of a temporal process in which certain experiences become actualized, but of the character, the essential nature, the 'ethos' of the subject which manifests itself in artistic creation."[11]

On a careful examination it should not be difficult to see that in any rigorous sense, none of the three categories of meaning is tenable. The first implies an almost contextless meaning, the second, direct observation of other minds at work; neither implication is tenable without assuming a metaphysical theory of knowledge and language, a theory expressly repudiated in modern sociologies of knowledge. However, our concern is not with the first two but with the third, viz., the documentary. With regard to this two difficulties arise. One: if one goes by the example Mannheim takes of an act of charity or assistance which is seen to be in reality one of hypocrisy, the documentary meaning turns out to be a kind of debunking; and this will raise far more problems in the understanding of a *Weltanschauung* than it might help to solve. Ignoring the example, our only guide is the statement quoted above. But then it is plainly circular—the documentary meaning of a cultural product being given in terms of the prior understanding of the whole outlook, which in turn is to be

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reconstructed from the documentary meaning of the cultural products. We have here an instance of the well-known hermeneutic circle.

Though Mannheim's own formulation is far from satisfactory, the distinction he is making is an important one. Through the concept of documentary meaning Mannheim is seeking to establish a meaning independent of the will and intention of the individual actors as well as of the immediate context of its use. In other words, he is thinking of a meaning that is universal and hence transcendent over its actualizations. He, however, is mistaken on two points. The first is this: When X communicates with Y, this (Z) in itself is a fact about X regardless of what the meaning and content of the communication between X and Y may be. Now if this fact (Z) is in itself significant, its meaning can be completely objective. It is inessential whether X and Y are aware of Z and its significance; the point is that they cannot determine it in any direct way. This, however, does not mean that what Z "documents" about X or Y is itself as incontrovertibly given as Z. Though Mannheim does not say anything that may specifically support this impression, it seems that he has projected the self-evidence of Z to its significance. There does not seem any other explanation of the irrelevant example of documentary meaning that he has chosen and the circular manner in which he has formally distinguished it from other meanings.

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The important question, however, is: how is the meaning of Z known? Or, in more formal terms, how does one know the "ethos" of an age actualized in the documentary meaning of the cultural product? Mannheim here has to resort to the phenomenological method—it is to be remembered that he rejected Scheler's phenomenological sociology of knowledge. While a general examination of the phenomenological method cannot be attempted, certain limitations of the method as they bear upon our special field must be mentioned here. The most fundamental is this: the phenomenological consciousness is not a culture-transcending consciousness. On the other hand, it is deeply culture-bound. The "commonsense constructs" with which it operates merely represent current or past culture and/or science. And as such, the discovery of the "ethos" is either mediated by other cultural constructs or it is merely one interpretation of contemporary culture: In both cases, there will remain the danger of distortion of the essence and also of alternative formulations of the same "ethos".

As will be plain from any careful reflection on the subject, the understanding and interpretation of a world-view involves, in the last analysis, the understanding (or intuition) of distinctive modes of consciousness. This, of course, is the reason why the phenomenological method is chosen by the modern thinker—indeed that is the only way out for him. But phenomenology (and the method of eidetic intuition)

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raises two related problems in this context which should be briefly considered here: The first is an extension of the difficulty already mentioned about its culture-bound nature. Our point is that this affects not only phenomenological intuition of another culture, but equally that of one's own culture, so that the phenomenological method is not a sure guide even for the understanding of one's own contemporary culture, because the "given" from which it starts its analysis is rarely, if ever, a natural or immediate datum: it is already an interpretation; and not even necessarily a universal one. Since the phenomenological analysis will investigate this "given" and arrive at the essence of the culture or world-view through this initial datum, the "essences", the invariants discovered by the phenomenological analysis will always be conditioned by it, at least in the sense that with another choice of the "given" the results could conceivably be very much different.

The other difficulty is even more serious. Consciousness according to phenomenology is always intentional. Now the very method of phenomenology raises an objection against it which calls for assumptions unacceptable to Mannheim and others. When the object of one consciousness is another consciousness—and this is what is involved in the method of attempting to grasp not any particular cultural product but the kind of mind which produced it—the nature of the consciousness is changed in

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the following way: The consciousness which grasps another has as its intention the grasped consciousness with its intention. But the two consciousnesses will be qualitatively different because the one has to grasp meanings, the other consciousness. One is directed inward, the other outward. This raises two problems: one is well-known: namely, that the phenomenological method involves, in the last analysis, a kind of solipsism or subjective "shut-upness" from which the phenomenologist has no accepted escape. It can be easily seen that the epistemological consequences of this are even more disconcerting: a sociology of knowledge becomes logically impossible.

This difficulty is usually solved by the phenomenologist through the concept of a transcendental consciousness. The sociologists of knowledge, barring the possible exception of Scheler, do not admit any such transcendentalism. But even if it were admitted, another serious question would arise. Are not the inner-directed and the other(outer)-directed consciousness so radically different as to fall into two separable categories? In other words, whether a transcendental consciousness standing at the summit of a series of consciousness is a consciousness at all.

In Dilthey's theory of *Weltanschauung* these difficulties are very clearly seen. In the first place, he has to admit that the interpretation of a *Weltanschauung* is in the last analysis the work of some kind of intuition and hence its

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validity cannot be demonstrated. And yet he insists on the inductive method of study. A whole has first to be seized, it has then to be verified by the success of the attempt to fit the parts together. Since parts could as well be fitted into two different wholes, Dilthey's method fails to guarantee against false intuitions.

The crucial difficulty of the sociological study of *Weltanschauung* arises from the sociologist's view that he ought to study a *Weltanschauung* without any commitments as to its truth and reality. Let us briefly consider this contention.

It is in terms of a world-outlook that everything directly or indirectly gets its meaning. (This is not a question of meaning or values only. All utilities, all matters of fact are not only coloured by the world-outlook of a society, they, in a sense, arise from it.) It is also important to note that this is true not only about the social world, but also, and no less decisively, of the natural world. Now, in the circumstances, is it possible to adopt a non-committal, value-neutral attitude to the study of *Weltanschauungen* of different cultures?

The first point to understand is that value-neutrality implies what may be called "reality-neutrality". Notwithstanding the modern distinction between Fact and Value, it is not possible to grant the reality of, say, Angels and Demons, and remain neutral to the value placed on them by the culture for which they are real. It is equally untenable

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to admit their cultural value, but deny their reality. To this the objection will be made that modern scientific outlook does not deny the reality of heavenly bodies, but its value attitude to them is entirely different from that of ancient times.

This introduces us to the very heart of the matter. In an astonishingly brief but profound and revolutionary work, *Saving the Appearances* (1957), Owen Barfield has shown, I think quite convincingly, how mistaken this common view is. He has drawn attention to the otherwise obvious point that the evolution of phenomena is correlative to consciousness. From this it follows that to a changed consciousness are correlated different phenomena. What are independent of consciousness are the "ultimate" constituents into which phenomena may be analyzed as atoms or particles or waves, etc. Barfield calls it the "unrepresented". Now what we usually assume is that the unrepresented being independent of consciousness, remains the same, though the corresponding phenomena have been changing.

This, however, is not the case. Modern science starts with phenomena (i.e., "reality" as it appears through human consciousness), analyzes them into their "ultimate" constituents and then leaves off, without going into their nature. It does not systematically study the relation between these ultimate constituents and the phenomena. Hence, the "reality" at which modern science arrives remains bound to

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phenomena—that is, to the modern consciousness. On the other hand, the ancient metaphysical view starts with the ultimate "unrepresented" itself and thence passes on to the phenomena which are its manifestations. Thus it depends upon a gnosis which has no need of any mediating consciousness.

When we look at the matter thus carefully, it is clear that the men who see the heavenly bodies as signatures of the Divine are affirming through it a radically different reality than those who see them as light-waves, etc. The former is man-transcending, the latter man-bound in orientation. If then we are right in holding that we cannot change the value and meaning and talk about the same reality, it follows that it is scarcely possible to understand a world-outlook while suspending judgment on the system of reality it implies.

Consider the contrast between the mediaeval and the modern "outlooks" as drawn by Barfield:

"Contemporary books were written, and contemporary science was expounded, for people assumed to share the collective representations of the writer, and accordingly our evidence must be sought more often in what is implied or assumed than in what is actually affirmed. We can only reconstruct the collective representations of another age obliquely."

"To begin with, we will look at the sky. We do not see it as empty space, for we know very well that a vacuum

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is something that nature does not allow, any more than she allows bodies to fall upwards. If it is daytime, we see the air filled with light proceeding from a living sun, rather as our own flesh is filled with blood proceeding from a living heart. If it is night-time, we do not merely see a plain, homogeneous vault pricked with separate points of light, but a regional, qualitative sky, from which first of all the different sections of the great zodiacal belt, and secondly the planets and the moon (each of which is embedded in its own revolving crystal sphere) are raying down their complex influences upon the earth, its metals, its plants, its animals and its men and women, including ourselves. We take it for granted that those invisible spheres are giving forth an inaudible music—the spheres, not the individual stars . . ."[12]

Now can we separate understanding and truth in this case? That there is a great temptation to do so is, of course, a fact, but this is precisely because we no longer believe the implied theory as true. Here we change our question, and instead of asking, Is it true? (which is presupposed to have been answered in the negative), we ask, How did people come to believe in such theories?

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Part Three

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Confronted with, say, the mediaeval or the ancient "world-outlook", what problems does the sociologist of knowledge face? He may raise the question of the truth of a *Weltanschauung*. Or, he may prefer to raise the question as to the conditions which make for the emergence of a particular kind of *Weltanschauung* holding that each is true for itself and there is no Absolute or Universal Truth.

Either way there are insuperable difficulties. To consider the second position in particular: To give up the concept of absolute truth, is to raise the question of collective consciousness. Two questions arise—the first is: How is a consciousness of the past possible? And this is not a question of establishing the logico-methodological possibility of something that were already a fact. When it is a question of a whole world-outlook, which is to be understood not as true or false, sound or erroneous but as a product of a specific mode of consciousness, it is highly doubtful if this consciousness can be revived. For it is not primarily a question of memory and empathy. The real problem arises from the fact that a non-participating contemplation of a mode of consciousness invariably takes on an aesthetic-poetic (in the Kierkegaardian sense) form, which must be distinguished from the "objective-scientific". This crucial difficulty which cannot be finally overcome within the framework of modern thought, is felt very clearly by both Barfield and Hannah Arendt; the former we have

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already quoted as telling us that it is only in an oblique way that we may have an occasional glimpse of a vanished age. Referring to the gap between past and future created by the breaking up of tradition, Arendt holds that "such elementary and direct questions as What is authority? What is freedom? can arise only if no answers, handed down by tradition, are available and valid any longer."[13]. In other words, the very emergence of this question is evidence that something vital has snapped. An age, an outlook for which the ideas of freedom and democracy, of power and authority, of individual and society, are crucial is bound to look on all other ages from this point of view. It is not that it cannot or does not envisage societies and ages which do not have these concepts and antitheses. But to characterize an outlook by the absence of these or any other concepts, or even to say that they are not central is to misunderstand it fundamentally. The same fundamental difficulty arises when we ask the question as to how and why a whole mode of consciousness gradually fades out and a new mode slowly takes its place. Let us reformulate this difficulty: the only answer to this question which would make a sociology of knowledge possible is as follows: basic changes in consciousness are due to extra-theoretical factors. The sociologist further contends that this extra-theoretical realm is that of society. But since the world-outlook is constitutive of the society in question, such an answer is viciously circular. In fact, when

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Sociology of Knowledge is viewed as the study of *Weltanschauungen*, there is no alternative to an immanentist view of knowledge and consciousness. The usual way out of this logical predicament is to make a distinction between the causal and the dialectical relationships and to say that Sociology of Knowledge postulates the latter relation between changes in consciousness and changes in extra-mental spheres.

Such a method will, however, be unworkable for the study of a world-outlook which includes social attitudes. On the other hand, if Sociology of Knowledge is conceived as the dialectic of the theoretic and the meta-theoretic, this would require us to explain social change exclusively in terms of non-human factors.

This is crucially important. Apart from (I) Tradition (symbol, myth, ritual) and traditional thinking where any sociology of knowledge and all modern social sciences must fail, Sociology of Knowledge is in deep trouble with reference to (II) The concept of the collective unconscious of the Jungian school and (III) Modern natural and exact sciences. The problematics of the relation between Sociology of Knowledge and the theories and practices of psychoanalysis would give rise to other complex and basic issues and dilemmas (in Rylean and other contexts) but none, unfortunately, can be discussed here.

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(I) *Traditional Thought*—We will not attempt a systematic characterization of Tradition partly because it is not indispensable to our discussion but mainly because, for reasons we just now indicated, this cannot be done. This, indeed, explains an undertone of polemics which can be detected in the writings of even the most competent interpreters—Coomaraswamy, Guénon, Schuon, and Eliade; while those writings which are free from all polemics (for instance, those of Gopinath Kaviraj) will be adequately intelligible only to one already instructed in the Tradition.

The most important aspect in this context is also the most fundamental. It is the idea of a Transcendent knowledge or wisdom, ineffable and accessible only through the intuition of the pure intellect—a knowledge utterly dialectical, absolutely self-transcending and hence finally negative.

Secondly, all tradition is communicated through Myths and symbolisms which have universal and eternal significance. These are the only and invariable means through which tradition is transmitted.

It is characteristic of traditional thought that it rejects all knowledge and holds that the ultimate truth has to be apprehended in pure intellection. Also, it has no place for the idea that knowledge has to be a process of cumulative acquisition. The eternal primordial wisdom naturally is not progressive.

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Now let us see how this mode of thought is dealt with by Sociology of Knowledge.

The sociologist may seek to establish the correlation of a certain kind of social structure with this kind of "outlook". We have already pointed out the circularity implicit in this view. But we shall not dilate on this point. Instead, we shall examine some other important points:

(i) The correlation of a certain social structure, whether or not a causal relation between the two is posited, will compromise the absolute character of the knowledge. For when this social structure decays (or changes), internal or external causes (or conditions) have to be found, otherwise either changes in the system of knowledge or those in the social system will be prior and autonomous. In both cases, the theory of correlation, correspondence or elective affinity has to be given up. On the other hand, the postulation of a third autonomous factor will not only indirectly relativize the system of knowledge, it will also be inconsistent with the relativist position from which traditional thought is understood.

(ii) The other device of the sociologist of knowledge is to relate each thought to the whole social situation and thus determine the particular perspective of the thought. In dealing with traditional thought, this perspectivist theory will again be inadequate. The reason can be easily seen by anyone familiar with the difference between absolutistic,

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mythological thinking on the one hand and modern, rationalistic thinking on the other. To regard an absolute as perspectivally determined is in effect to deny its absolute character. Consequently, it is to falsify it. For the implicit or explicit absolutism of traditional thought is essential to it. Much of traditional thinking makes claim to universality and if that claim is rejected this does not mean merely that its scope has been circumscribed, it means that its authenticity itself has been challenged. This is particularly true when the perspectival and modal character of all human truth and reality is recognized in traditional thought itself and in a far deeper and comprehensive sense than one is ever likely to encounter in modern thought.

The following paragraphs from Schuon should make this quite clear.

"To be orthodox means to participate, through the medium of a doctrine that can properly be called 'traditional', in the immutability of the principles which govern the Universe and fashion our intelligence.

"What perhaps somewhat complicates the definition of orthodoxy is the fact that it presents two principal modes, one being essential or intrinsic and the other formal or extrinsic: the latter concerns its accord with truth in some particular revealed form, the former its accord with essential, universal truth, whether or no this agrees also with a given particular form, so that, viewed from outside, these two

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modes may sometimes oppose one another. For example, Buddhism is extrinsically heterodox in relation to Hinduism, because it is separated from the basic forms of the latter; but it is intrinsically orthodox because it accords with the universal truth from which it derives."[14]

"The very wide range of forms belonging to Hinduism may be bewildering to some minds, but could never mean that Hinduism sanctions error, as is in fact done by modern philosophy, where 'genius' and 'culture' count as much as or more than truth, and where the very idea of truth is even called in question by some people; the formal 'fluidity' peculiar to Hinduism in no way prevents error being always recognisable, there as everywhere else, whether by the aid of scriptural criteria, or in the light of metaphysical truth, which immediately discloses absurdity, even when heterodoxy is founded on a sacred text, of course through distortion of its meaning. The doctrines of *jnana* and *bhakti* contradict one another externally because of the difference of levels and modes, but neither is absurd in itself: to say that the world is unreal, or that it is real, or that it is both at once, or again that it is neither one nor the other, will be true according to the perspective adopted, and these perspectives result from objective reality and not from human arbitrariness; the heterodoxy which is intrinsic is, we repeat, contrary not only to a particular perspective or a particular formulation, but to the very nature of things, for it

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results, not from a perspective legitimate by nature and therefore 'providential', but from the arbitrary judgement of a mind left to its own resources and obliged to 'create' what the Intellect when paralysed—fundamentally or 'accidentally'—cannot transmit to it."[15]

These profound observations make it quite clear why authentic traditional thought, particularly the Hindu tradition, cannot be understood in terms of contemporary socio-economic structure, nor can Sociology of Knowledge explain away its universality and immutability through a general theory of perspectives designed to save Sociology of Knowledge from a self-stultifying skepticism endemic to it. The basic reason brought out by Schuon is to be found in the distinction between the esoteric and exoteric forms of doctrine maintained in almost all traditions. In the very nature of the case, Sociology of Knowledge can touch only the exoteric aspects: the relativistic character of which is acknowledged by Tradition itself. When, however, the sociologist wishes or claims to socio-analyze the esoteric doctrines, he is obviously coming up against an insuperable difficulty, for he is not only ignoring the distinction, he cannot logically explain it without at the same time presupposing it to be false. (And that, in the last analysis, involves the notion of absolute truth unacceptable to the sociologist of knowledge.)

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This becomes even clearer in the case of the theory of perspectives. The technique of perspective-analysis as used by Mannheim is not designed to superimpose one perspective upon another; its purpose is to discover and make explicit the perspective implicit in a set of propositions. And hence true to its principles, the sociologist of knowledge can only discover and lay bare the specific level and mode of a given doctrine. But to do this in the case of traditional thought is neither relativism nor positivism nor sociologism; for a doctrine of perspectives is part of the tradition: but modern sociology cannot deal with perspectives of traditional thought which are often cosmically oriented. Moreover, the traditional doctrines of perspectives and possibilism and probabilism (for instance, Jainism's seven-valued logic and the doctrine of possibilism as also its relativistic teleology) carry their radical self-relativization to nihilistic extremes. Any sociology, psychology or history of knowledge, Foucault's archaeology or genealogy of knowledge included, cannot, therefore, even include traditional relativism within their scope, to say nothing of understanding and explaining them. It is simple: all modern radicalism stops short of nihilism; it is the unholy ghost modern thought is exorcising continually and forever. On the other hand, to superimpose one perspective upon another is not only to step beyond the proper scope of perspective-analysis, it is also to distort the original

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perspective. This must necessarily be so when the so-called "free and neutral perspective" is superimposed on a perspective determined from a transcendental centre.

This inapplicability of Sociology of Knowledge to traditional thinking, particularly that of India, is merely an aspect of a much deeper difficulty that arises from the consistently symbolic nature of traditional thought.

"Symbolism is a language and a precise form of thought; a hieratic and a metaphysical language and not a language determined by somatic or psychological categories. Its foundation is in the analogical correspondence of all orders of reality and states of being or levels of reference; it is because "This world is in the image of that, and vice versa" (*Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VIII. 2, and *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, IV. 10) that it can be said *Coeli enarrant gloriam Dei.*

"The nature of an adequate symbolism could hardly be better stated than in the words "The parabolical (Skr. *Parôkṣa*) sense is contained in the literal (Skr. *pratyakṣa*)." "[16]

"The *pratyakṣa* term stands for the *parokṣa* referent; for example, "the lotus means the Waters, this Earth is a leaf thereof," *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, VII, 4, 1, 8, where lotus and leaf have physical, Waters (= Possibility) and Earth (= Ground) metaphysical, referents. Evidently it is not necessary that the *parokṣa* and *pratyakṣa* terms should be sensibly distinct; the *puṣkara* which is spoken of as the

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birthplace of Agni or Vasiṣṭha, and which represents the Ground of all existence, is not the *puṣkara* of the botanist, though the words are the same. The actual lotus-leaf laid down upon the Fire Altar has no necessary meaning of its own, quâ lotus-leaf; it is merely a datum with respect to which we can have only estimative or affective knowledge; it *is* the referent of *puṣkara-parṇa*, but *impersonates* the referent of the *parokṣa* term *pṛthivī*. The distinction is one of reference, which the student, guided by the context, or if necessary by the Commentator, is expected to understand; and if he takes the reference literally, we say that his understanding is superficial. For the *parokṣa* and *pratyakṣa* references are not coincident: the former are names of assumed or otherwise known but not perceptible referents (cf. Śaṅkarâcāraya on *Aitareya Upaniṣad*, III, 14); and the latter, names of sensibly experienced referents which are, or are regarded as, merely symbols of or suitable substitutes for the aforesaid unseen referents. It follows that the reference of the *parokṣa* term is much wider than that of the *pratyakṣa* term; viz., in that of the many conceivable signs of or substitutes for the operating but unseen referent the *pratyakṣa* term specifies only one. It follows at the same time that the *parokṣa* vocabulary will be much less numerous than the *pratyakṣa*; the Angels have fewer ideas, and use less means than men."[17]

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It is not our point here that the sociologists of knowledge have totally ignored traditional thought. On the contrary, Mannheim makes it quite clear that his Sociology of Knowledge is a direct polemical response to the transcendental theory of the historiography of ideas. But it is equally clear that no serious attempt has been made to understand the traditional cosmology or "world-view" in the light of its own theory of meaning and interpretation. In consequence, there has been no serious attempt to analyze the essentially symbolic mode of traditional thought. The "sociology of knowledge" of Durkheim and Pareto almost precludes it by denying to the thought of the "primitive" people any philosophical status.

Mannheim has, however, made two attempts to grapple with the problem of interpreting traditional thought. "Wishful thinking has always figured in human affairs. When the imagination finds no satisfaction in existing reality, it seeks refuge in wishfully constructed places and periods. Myths, fairy tales, other-worldly promises of religion, humanistic fantasies, travel romances, have been continually changing expressions of that which was lacking in actual life."[18]

Take any well-known myth—a creation myth, a myth of eternal return, a love myth, myths of child god, myths about primordial chaos: in each and every case, Mannheim's theory will prove utterly untenable.

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Our present point is, however, different: namely that this approach ignores altogether the symbolic dimension and that too in the case of something which is nothing if not symbolic.

This, on any plain view, is tantamount to admitting the inability of the sociologist to deal with the symbolic-mythical thought. But it seems to us that such a view of the traditional cosmos-consciousness is part of the contemporary *Weltanschauung*—Freud and Pareto both adopt it in their own ways.

Our point is that if the truth of symbolic thinking is not accepted—and accepting it means accepting a metaphysic and an ontology—there can be no understanding or analysis of such thinking. (Indeed, all thinking rightly so-called is symbolic; no analysis and comprehension of human thinking and knowledge can be independent of the universal *telos* of thinking: truth.) Pareto sees this and classifies traditional thought as falsehood. It is another matter that this gives rise to serious difficulties even for a positivist: some of them were noticed by Pareto who tried to solve them by a theory of residues and derivations. The fact that the Paretian residues represent a combination of subjective and social elements shows merely the inadequacy of the psychological (theory of ideology) and the logical (the study of *Weltanschauungen*, presuppositions of thought) versions of Sociology of Knowledge.

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Mannheim's other attempt to deal with symbolic thinking and knowledge was *via* the concept of Documentary meaning which was discussed earlier in this Essay. As will be remembered, we tried to show that through this concept Mannheim was seeking to arrive at a level of meaning which was independent of the author's personal motivations, and was objectively as certain as possible. However, as we tried to show, such a level of meaning cannot be attained without stepping beyond Mannheim's frame of reference; the reason is that if the documentary meaning is not to be tacitly presupposed or arbitrarily super-imposed, it must be rooted in the structure of the universe; in other words, it should be transhuman and transtemporal. In fact, this will be clear if one follows consistently the implications of the procedure involved in arriving at documentary meaning. Essentially it consists in treating the sign-vehicle as a sign. This procedure, if continued consistently, implies the idea that every fact is a sign and leads to the concept of the world as an hierophany. A discipline which treats it as nothing more than a particular mental construction or projection, cannot be adequate to a symbolic mode of thinking which presupposes what Barfield calls the participating consciousness. Moreover, such a discipline cannot be faithful to the basic tenets of positivism (or empiricism). No theory of "world-views", *Weltanschauungen*, can ever grasp traditional thinking to

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which the idea of objectifying the cosmos is alien. As Heidegger has shown, the notion of a "world-view" arises only when man reduces the world to a picture. "As soon as the world becomes picture, the position of man is conceived as a world view."[19] It follows that a world-view is necessarily anthropocentric; the so-called modern scientific world-view can be only an incoherent promise that is predicated upon the project of Man achieving knowledge and power to create the universe *ex nihilo*.

(II) That the incapacity of Sociology of Knowledge in relation to traditional thought is not merely restrictive of its scope but indicative of its basic weakness, is shown indirectly by the work of Jung and his school of analytical psychology in which symbolism has a central place and which, in its own way, shows the perennial relevance of the "mythic" (Cassirer's Mythopoeic) or "symbolic" consciousness.. To Jung, therefore, we may now turn.

Mannheim has already clearly recognized that the concept of the collective unconscious is not only highly relevant but, in fact, central to Sociology of Knowledge. "There is implicit in the word "ideology" the insight that in certain situations the collective unconscious of certain groups obscures the real condition of society both to itself and to others and thereby stabilizes it."

"In the utopian mentality, the collective unconscious, guided by wishful representation and the will to action, hides

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certain aspects of reality. It turns its back on everything which would shake its belief or paralyse its desire to change things."

"It is the task of this volume," continues Mannheim, "to trace out, in the two directions indicated, the most significant phases in the emergence of this discovery of the role of the unconscious as it appears in the history of ideology and utopia."[20]

Obviously this conception of the central task of Sociology of Knowledge is based on the assumption that it is a generalized theory of ideology. In the early Parts of this Essay, we have endeavoured to show the untenability of Stark's elaborate attempt at separating off the theory of ideology. At this stage, however, we want to show that even apart from the theory of ideology, the concept of the collective unconscious cannot fit into the logical framework of Sociology of Knowledge.

It is true that Mannheim does not mean by the collective unconscious anything like what Jung means by it. However, as the following examination will show, once the idea of the unconscious has been admitted, the substance of the Jungian concept can scarcely be avoided.

The difference between the concepts of Mannheim and Jung arises from the fact that Mannheim thinks of the collective unconscious atomistically as made up of the individual unconscious. From this point of view, the

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unconscious is both group-bound and culture-bound. The collective unconscious, more simply, is the summary word for certain "unconscious" motivations; that is, those of which the individuals are largely unaware and which are found to be shared by a considerable number of people over a period of time. This, in the last analysis, will be nothing more than a set of deep-seated prejudices; collective, because they have gradually disengaged themselves from the particular individual life-situations and social conditions which might have produced them. The point is that in some way they must be supposed to be autonomous psychic states, otherwise, if they are simply socio-economic factors of which most individuals are unaware, these factors cannot, properly speaking, be called unconscious.

It is this implication of the autonomy of certain psychic states or contents that has led to the Jungian concept of the collective unconscious, which was in fact already foreshadowed by Freud in his metaphysical theory of instinct (as also in Bastian's Elementary Ideas). (In fact, an eminent member of the Jungian school, H. G. Baynes, entitles his chapter on symbolism as "Symbol, the Ruler and the Transformer of Instinct".) Now in the present context, the most important aspect of Jung's thought is the discovery that the unconscious complexes and fantasies are regularly associated with myths, symbols and arche-types. Arche-types, of course, are not innate inherited images. They are

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the universal logical matrices of collective images. For example the struggle between Light and Darkness is an arche-type: it can be manifested in the myth of the sun—the hero who escapes from the dark womb of Mother Earth only to sink into it at close of each day; or, it can appear in the myth of the dragon-killer; or as the birth of Christ in Man's heart. In the same way symbols are not just representations. "Every view which interprets the symbolic expression as an analogue or an abbreviated designation for a *known* thing is *semiotic*. A view which interprets the symbolic expression as the best possible formulation of a relatively *unknown* thing, which for that reason cannot be more clearly or characteristically represented, is *symbolic*."[21]

The Jungian psychology thus deals with an unconscious which is not at all culture-bound; it is universal and supratemporal. The importance of Jung's findings is twofold: Firstly, his work assembles and analyzes a vast amount of evidence to show that the traditional corpus of myths, symbols and arche-types cannot be explained in terms of social structure, that it is collective in the sense that it transcends both the individual psyche and any particular socio-cultural system; in other words, it represents the universal heritage of man *qua* man. It is unconscious not as a result of repression, but in the sense that it is not explicable in terms of reason, logic, commonsense or any other intelligible mental process. In view of the unmistakable

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teleological character of the dynamics of the "collective unconscious", it may be apter to call it the super-conscious rather than the unconscious, and Jung is fully aware of this. He is emphatic that contents of an archetypal character are manifestations of processes in the collective unconscious. In the last analysis, therefore, it is impossible to say what they refer to. "Every interpretation necessarily remains an "as-if"."[22]

At the same time, he also tells us that the myth deals with traditional forms of incalculable age. They look back to a prehistoric world whose spiritual preconceptions and general conditions we can still observe among existing primitives. Myths, on this plane, are as a rule tribal history handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. The "essentially unconscious" which nevertheless has knowledgeable manifestation thus points unmistakably to the Absolute which is Unknowable and Ineffable. But in loyalty to his scientific creed Jung wishes to be extremely cautious at this point, lest any one should draw metaphysical and ontological inferences from this. He would, therefore, not talk of the mythical figures as real or divine but would regard them as projections of unconscious mental contents. About this too he is deliberately noncommittal.

Jung's thought constitutes a basic challenge to the tenets of Sociology of Knowledge in most of its versions except that of Scheler. It constitutes a basic challenge,

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firstly, because it refutes its relativism from an empirical-historical standpoint. It not only establishes universal and timeless ideas (mental contents), it also shows—and this is more important—that thought and knowledge are transcendentally determined in the direction of the suprapsychic. In any case, there is a dimension of our mental life which is not socially and culturally determined in any way. In the second place, the Jungian conception of the collective unconscious shows that neither conventional psycho-therapy nor the newer socio-therapy will be adequate to the distortions of the collective psyche.

There seem to be two ways in which the sociologist of knowledge could deal with this situation. One is to say that in so far as Jung's thought derives from the world of mental sickness which, on Jung's own showing, is a reflection of contemporary social-cultural malaise, its findings must be viewed as relative to the state of contemporary society. That is, the universal figures may be merely projections of social disintegration. But this will not do because the figures, the symbols, to which the modern (sick) mind turns, are not exclusive to our age, or to periods of disintegration in general.

The other line of defence might be to apply to Jung the technique of socio-analysis. Let us see if the challenge is met by showing that Jung's thinking is conditioned by his socio-cultural situation. The main point is to show that

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Jung's results are false or inadequate and that the universal symbols, archetypes, etc. are not really universal and timeless.

A socio-analysis of Jung is more or less precluded because he himself adopts a fundamental device of sociological analysis. He repeatedly suggests Divine and Absolute Beings. But throughout he keeps a noncommittal attitude. They may be merely psychic contents, their externality merely an illusion. In other words, he shows that they are real on the projective and social levels, but they may or may not be real at any other level. Now this is the very device modern thinkers also adopt in dealing with all forms of alien knowledge and belief-systems. So any psycho-social enquiry into the genesis of Jungian thought is not likely to throw any helpful light on the truth of mythical and symbolic knowledge; nor can it affect Jung's finding that the mythological and symbolic consciousness is not a historical stage but a perennial presence. It follows that it is not one of the perspectives, but the perspective which includes all others. In any case, it cannot be translated into any other; the psychological language into which Jung tries to translate it is admittedly inadequate. ("Every interpretation necessarily remains an "as-if".)

As Kerényi puts it: "If we stay within the bounds of mythology it is immediately evident why this reduction to a natural phenomenon—to "non-myth" as Frobenius calls it—

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is unjust and unsatisfactory and therefore false. In mythology itself the allegorical value of a mythological image, such as the image of all the child-gods, and the allegorical value of the natural phenomena themselves, the rising sun and the rising of a new-born child, are reciprocal and *equal*: the rising sun and the new-born child are just as much an allegory of the Primordial Child as the Primordial Child is an allegory of the rising sun and of all the new-born children in the world."[23] It is this multivalence, this polysignificant nature of myths and symbols that is recognized clearly in traditional systems of interpretation which leave Sociology of Knowledge far behind.

(III) The third incapacity of Sociology of Knowledge concerns the modern scientific thought.

Mannheim recognizes and in fact emphasizes the difference between the truths of the natural sciences and those of the human. This may even be said to be the basic motivation of his sociology of knowledge. As is well-known Mannheim and others emphasize the special nature of truth as relational and perspectival. In fact, this is his means of overcoming the self-defeating turns of his relativism—for if we recognize that the very nature of truth is different in human studies, there will be no problem of relative *versus* absolute truth. (Though that will generate another problem of two parallel truths.)

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We are not concerned here with the relational and perspectival nature of truth; our critique has already shown the untenability of this view. But the fact that Sociology of Knowledge excludes scientific thought from its purview gives rise to serious difficulties.

In the first place, the dichotomy of culture and science is incompatible with the claim of Sociology of Knowledge to analyze and understand the evolution of *Weltanschauungen*. A world-outlook is by definition a man's total outlook, it includes his thinking about nature as well as about his own life and history. And historically we have seen that the ancient and mediaeval "outlooks" are unitary and total; there is no division between social knowledge and nature-knowledge. It is precisely about what is regarded as their nature-thought that Sociology of Knowledge applies its technique of socio-analysis. But if the entire *"Weltanschauung"* of archaic and mediaeval man could be analyzed sociologically, we have no ground to deny that modern natural science is part of modern man's *Weltanschauung* and has only the relative validity of a cultural truth, like that of ancient times. As sociologists of knowledge, we have no ground for holding that while the ancient natural philosophies were culture-bound, modern natural science is not. For this would force us to admit a basic schism in man's historical life and this schism cannot be logically insulated from natural science. Or, we must

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hold that just as for the first time in "universal history" man has seen the truth about nature, so he will see the truth about himself. In other words, the sociologist of knowledge cannot grant the absolute nature of modern natural science and yet reject the attempts of those who want to attain the same for the study of man.

The first to see this were, as we all know, the Marxians. They were clear that man strives towards integration. They also saw that both the study of man and the study of nature are the work of man, and hence they will be part of a single world-outlook. Their theory of class determination of thought and ideological distortion makes no distinction between natural science and social science.

Marxian thinkers had perhaps to adopt it because of their monistic epistemology. Political and strategic considerations were also there. But it remains, nonetheless, true that this is the only logical course. Otherwise, among other things, the thesis of Sociology of Knowledge will be reduced to the truism that in thought about society, social facts are reflected just as in natural science, natural facts are reflected.

It is true that this position became increasingly difficult to maintain. It was by no means easy to show the class character of, say, the second law of thermodynamics,[24] and even more difficult to have a Soviet physics, Soviet chemistry, Soviet genetics, etc., in opposition to bourgeois

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physics, chemistry, etc. But the most effective blow came from another direction. It was the gradual revelation that basic changes in social structure do not correspond to changes in Language. It is well known that there had been a bitter controversy among Soviet Academicians on this question, which came to a rest only after Stalin had declared language a part of the substructure which remains comparatively stable. Wrote Stalin:

"In this respect language differs radically from superstructure. Language is generated not by one base or another, by the old base or the new within a given society, but by the entire historic development of society and the history of the bases over the centuries. It is created not by any one class but by the whole society, by all classes of society, by the efforts of hundreds of generations. It is created not to meet the needs of any one class but of the whole society, of all classes in society. This is precisely why it is created as the language of the whole people, as a society's single language, common to all members of the society. In view of this, the role of language as a servant, as a means of communication for people consists not in serving one class to the detriment of other classes but in equal service to the entire society, to all classes in society. Strictly speaking, this is the reason why language can serve equally both the old, dying order and the new, emerging one, both

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the old base and the new, both exploiters and the exploited."[25]

Though the Marxists did not pursue this problem, this change is as fundamental as it is straight. For, it suggests a new dimension of the conditioning of Thought and Knowledge; and it restores their autonomy in respect of Social Structure.

This new dimension to the problem of Sociology of Knowledge is of far-reaching consequences. The correlation of the structure of a language and the basic structure of reality is not of the same logical type as that between knowledge or thought and social structure. The correlation of language and reality relativizes metaphysical knowledge, Wisdom or Gnosis, but not in terms of society or any other sphere. It is, so to say, an absolute relativization. It issues in a linguistic solipsism, intimately self-stultifying.

This aspect of the matter has been deeply reflected in the later work of Wittgenstein, who approached philosophy by concentrating on language. He has destroyed all forms of *apriorism*, all concepts of necessity—not only in logic, and philosophy, but equally in mathematics. Contrary to first impressions, his positive conclusion is not in favour of conventionalism, postulationism or social pragmatism. "What has to be accepted, the given, is—so one could say—*forms of life.*"[26] "Forms of life" certainly does not refer to that which works, or is useful, etc. He is driving towards

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the idea of sheer suchness of life and his positive teaching which, strictly speaking, cannot be stated, is, as has been noted by some students, a suggestion of the Zen doctrine of "No-Mind". (Consider, for instance, the deeper import of his constant endeavour to uncover the hidden presuppositions of our commonsense beliefs and thoughts on the one hand, and his imaginative constructions of situations in which some of our oddest statements might hold.)

The basic divergence between modern and traditional thought does not arise from the relativism of the former and the absolutism of the latter. It arises from the fact that Traditional thought is radically relativistic, while modern thought is only partially so. The radicalism of ancient traditional view derives from its anthropology; man's finitude and temporality prevent him from seeing the whole truth. All knowledge, including the scriptural, is declared divergent and only relatively true. No less an orthodox source than the Mahābhārata declares: "Dharma is not established by Reason, the scriptures are different (speak in discordant voices) and there is no sage whose word is authoritative. Dharma is the way great sages follow."

Skepticism can hardly go further (without cancelling itself). In the same way, the social and culture-bound nature of all human thought is hardly argued, it is taken for granted. Indeed, tradition starts at the extreme logical point: so long as

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our cognition is conditioned by prior congnitions, objective knowledge or truth is out of the question. Peirce saw the root problem clearly when among man's basic incapacities he listed the following: "We have no power of Intuition, but every cognition is determined logically by previous cognitions."[27] And so traditional thought regards the conditioned nature of human knowledge as an aspect of temporality and hence not only universal but also radical. No sphere of knowledge is immune to it. But no solution is proposed; for there is none except stopping the very flow of consciousness—a solution to which phenomenology would lead if it were consistent. (Obviously a traditional thinker cannot consider even for a minute solutions framed in terms of inter-translation of perspectives, or the objectivity of "unattached intellectuals". To him it is obvious that if it is structural factors which condition thought, nothing short of getting out of the structure would do.)

The fundamental logical difficulty of all modern sociologies of knowledge is stated acutely by Schuon: "All relativism applied to the intelligence as such—or to the truth —is radically false, and this falsity is in fact the result of the inner contradiction which all 'intellectual' relativism implies; for on what grounds is it possible to base judgement when one denies, implicitly or explicitly, the possibility of objective judgement, in short of judgement as such?"[28]

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Modern sociology or modern philosophy cannot resolve this difficulty without stepping into the discarded world of tradition. So far as tradition is considered, the difficulty, in this form, simply does not exist, for tradition starts with an Absolute that is vibrationless, wordless, thoughtless. There is, however, one aspect of the problem which is of great sociological significance. It is the fact that tradition is not one but many. A number of religious traditions—Hindu, Christian, Islamic—each claiming descent from the Absolute: this has been one of the most serious problems and has often led to violent socio-political conflicts. In fact, this has been the original source of all modern relativism of values and knowledge. The history of its solutions is, therefore, long and complicated and must be ignored here, except for a mention of the Hindu solution which has the merit of assimilating the essential problematics of Sociology of Knowledge and resolving (or better dissolving) it at a higher level.

The Hindu tradition holds the world-creating and the language-creating powers of the Absolute as Primordially identical. It is outside the scope of this Essay to attempt a detailed exposition or analysis of this truth which is extremely difficult to understand. However, in an Annex (pp. 227-233) to this Essay, extracts from Sir John Woodroffe are being reproduced which should give some idea of traditional thinking on such problems.

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A brief glance at these extracts will make it clear that for the traditional theory the problem is not one of analyzing the relation between thought and action, knowledge and society, discursive and non-discursive practices, but one of developing one's consciousness to the point where it can grasp their primordial unity as well as the true nature of the forces that disrupt this unity. False consciousness, in short, is the real problem and Marx (and to an extent, Mannheim who claims to write in opposition to Marxian teaching but essentially in the same spirit) is undoubtedly right in making this the central problem of his theory of knowledge. But the falsification is universal, except for differences of mode, level and degree. Centred in the Absolute, traditional thinking is, at one and the same time, metaphysical and ontological, existential and praxiological: every problem is ultimately viewed as a task and every solution, correspondingly, as only a stage in Self-realization. For the Hindu, determination itself is the crux of the problem—it is of secondary importance as to whether it is social, economic, psychic or spiritual determination. And thus the conquest of thought-determination is possible only through the ascent towards the Yogic transcendental consciousness where the *Parā Vāk* is heard to be dissolved ultimately in the *Aśabda*, the Great Void, without sound, without vibration.

Similarly, the more basic problem arising from the fact that man cannot think without images and language and

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hence his entire construction of reality is linguistic, conventional and subjective in a radical sense, is not solved by a coordination of points of view or by a faith in a community of scientists. Nor is there any confusion between the collective and the universal; collective agreement is not necessarily synonymous with universal Truth.

The problem of self-reference is overcome not by ignoring it and regarding it as a pseudo-problem nor is it met with a pious hope in its future resolution. It is resolved only in Yogic Knowledge: de-mentation, cessation of all cogitations; not the *cogito* but the identity of being and consciousness is the *telos* of traditional thinking.

The traditional, especially the Hindu-Buddhist view of knowledge is based on the possibility of Pure Knowledge. And that involves the identity of the knower, the knowledge and the known and the postulation of a syntaxless language. The relativity, the conditioned nature of all knowledge is overcome by pure transcendental consciousness (synonymous with non-consciousness) which can be achieved by the *Jñānins* and the *Yogins* at the summit of an arduous intellectual and spiritual discipline.

In tradition, the fundamental problem of Sociology of Knowledge—the relation of thought and action, of theory and practice, does not arise, or arises in a very different form. For tradition, particularly the Hindu tradition, starts

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from an Absolute which is both Thought and Action in Primordial unity.

As was indicated earlier too, extreme perspectivism (or aspectualism) and radical skepticism is infused into Hindu traditional theory—"The one Reality is viewed and described in many ways by men of knowledge." This may be said to be the very keynote of Hindu thought. But its radical difference from modern thought arises from the fact that traditional aspectualism (or the Postulate of standpoints) is rooted in symbolism and in negative metaphysics and modal ontology. On the other hand, appearances to the contrary, modern thought presupposes a positive metaphysics and a substantial ontology. Tradition starts from the Non-Being and the vibrationless word or Non-word of which Being or the Transcendent Divine Word is the determination from which flow all the secondary determinations that make up the cosmic existence.

This certainly does not offer any solution to the really crucial problem of the encounter of Non-Being and Being. That remains the Great Mystery, *Lila*. Hindu Tradition, however, enables us to have the concept and theory of what Schuon has aptly called the Relatively Absolute: an idea outside the framework of Sociology of Knowledge conceived either as a general theory of ideological thinking or as a general theory of standpoints. Without a negative metaphysic and modal ontology, the theory of perspectives

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or standpoints cannot but issue in that contradiction-in-terms—the Absolutely Relative.

The most significant consequence of a positivistic sociology of knowledge, which necessarily lacks any concept of the Relatively Absolute, is that qualitative distinctions cannot be logically made. For unless the basic determinations of persons and things reflect the Absolute, they remain sheerly accidental and nothing more than quantitative differences. The world would be a mere amorphous substance. (From the historical point of view this means a world where anything could happen, and everything could have been otherwise.)

In a humanistic society this means that everything is permitted—it is this perilous implication which Hughes has in mind when he says:

"For we play with the notion that the underdog race might, under certain conditions, have been on top. Our very study implies always the attitude about everything that made Robert Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* so intriguing and got him into so much trouble: "It could have been otherwise." This is an intolerable and dangerous idea, in a world of conflicting social ideologies."[29]

More generally, the consequence of a non-traditional sociology of knowledge, or sociology of epistemology, when all spurious "conquests of social determination" are cast aside, is a radical world-alienation—a situation in which

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"neither history nor nature is at all conceivable. This twofold loss of the world—the loss of nature and the loss of human artifice in the widest sense, which would include all history—has left behind it a society of men who, without a common world which would at once relate and separate them, either live in desperate lonely separation or are pressed together into a mass. For a mass-society is nothing more than that kind of organized living which automatically establishes itself among human beings who are still related to one another but have lost the world once common to all of them."[30]

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Part Four

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Hannah Arendt's verdict may sound extreme, extravagant and, to some, even perverse. They may point out that it is the Absolute-centred civilizations—the traditional Hindu-Buddhist, for instance—that are "world-renouncing" and "life negating"; and, it is in them that man is led to a bitterly radical world-alienation. To see the truth of Hannah Arendt's insight and the discontinuity of the modern civilization with traditional civilizations, the nature of the latter has to be carefully understood. Granting to the world and to history only contingent, transient and conditioned, relative reality, and understanding human life and history in terms of Revealed anagogic meaning and self-transcending *telos*, traditional civilizations are necessarily existential and are related to world and history in a dialectic of finitude and Infinity, the relative and the Absolute, time and Eternity. Wilfully insulating himself against the voices of reality and thus rendering himself deaf to the Word of Revelation, modern man is naturally led to a totalizing, monological and self-relativizing thought that renders the world opaque and history silent.

It is this wilful hardening of the heart, this corrosion and cor-ruption of good will, this liberalism and secret "veneration of the baser instincts" that lies at the foundation of the new physical sciences and the emerging socio-historical sciences, the one aspiring to wrest the last, the darkest secrets from Nature, the other obsessed with "the

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obligation of making history—world history" (while at the same time relying absolutely on the hypothesis of evolutionism). The common underlying faith in the future of man as an omniscient and omnipotent being, a new species—it is this new mode of socio-economic and philosophical thought that has been supporting the nature and progress of the natural and exact sciences. It is true that modern biology, physics, mathematics, cybernetics, etc., have provided the basic paradigm for the historical, social and psychological sciences, as well as most of the dominant schools of modern philosophy. It is however profoundly important to realize that without the fundamental mutation of thought from hierocentric to ego-centric that followed the defiant, proud flight from the Absolute and the Eternal, the development of the modern literalist, idolatrous physical sciences and predatory-exploitative technology would scarcely be possible. It is not, of course, a question of causal determination or chronological priority. It is the question of the conditions of possibility, of the logical space that are presupposed in the rise and development of modern science and technology, indeed in the genesis and maturation of modern Western civilization.

It is one of the main tasks of Sociology of Knowledge to provide the comprehension and legitimation, a kind of self-founding of the (modern) ego-centric consciousness and thus a metatheory of the social sciences in

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which the consciousness finds its systematic manifestation. If, however, the logico-dialectical impossibility of Sociology of Knowledge argued in this Essay is accepted, sociology and other social sciences remain unfounded: for their core and crucial problem, viz., the transition from false to true consciousness cannot be resolved, except on a metaphysical basis which modern thought rules out. This failure, if final, would imply that the modern social sciences originate and remain imprisoned in false consciousness, for once the traditional ahistorical, revelatory grounding of epistemology and systems of human knowledge is rejected and they (epistemology and systems of human knowledge) are grounded in evolutionism and history, epistemology and human knowledge fall permanently under the shadow of false consciousness. In a different but essentially cognate context, Foucault has made some profoundly illuminating observations:

"All the sciences, analyses or practices employing the root 'psycho-' have their origin in this historical reversal of the procedures of individualization. The moment that saw the transition from historico-ritual mechanisms for the formation of individuality to the scientifico-disciplinary mechanisms, when the normal took over from the ancestral, and measurement from status, thus substituting for the individuality of the memorable man that of the calculable man, that moment when the sciences of man became possible

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is the moment when a new technology of power and a new political anatomy of the body were implemented. And if from the early Middle Ages to the present day the 'adventure' is an account of individuality, the passage from the epic to the novel, from the noble deed to the secret singularity, from long exiles to the internal search for childhood, from combats to phantasies, it is also inscribed in the formation of a disciplinary society."[31]

A general theory of this transition, or more correctly, these take-overs and substitutions, is indispensable for the social sciences if their scientific claims are taken at all seriously. It is thus the specific and intransferable task of Sociology of Knowledge to provide this general theory at the noetic level itself. This general theory has to include frameworks (and a coherent system of frameworks) for understanding and explaining traditional as well as modern (physical, biological and mathematical-cybernetic) scientific knowledge. As we have already noted in this Essay, Sociology of Knowledge, by its syntax and logic, fails (and cannot but fail) to comprehend traditional thinking and knowledge. As to modern scientific thought and knowledge, non-Marxian sociology of knowledge excludes it from its jurisdiction thus granting it *ab initio* or axiomatic trans-historical universality and absolute validity. This, it should be obvious, is not just a limitation on the scope of Sociology of Knowledge, it reduces Sociology of Knowledge to being

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a kind of casuistic apology for the modern consciousness, and the social sciences to being the ideology (or ideologies) of the dominance of modern Western civilization. Methodically, the consequences of the preclusion of modern scientific thought and knowledge from historico-sociological relativization are far more serious than the failure to develop a tenable social-scientific theory of traditional thinking and knowledge. By virtue of this preclusion there would be two parallel epistemologies: the one, scientific and universally valid and the other, non-scientific philosophical and "social-scientific" epistemology which would be local and only situationally valid. This would be a strange situation in which two discontinuous modes of knowledge would be operating—often concurrently—placing man in a state of permanent and irredeemable schizophrenia.

Before we consider the far-reaching consequences of this split in our consciousness, a fresh reference to the Marxian position on this problem seems necessary (the subject was discussed in the preceding part on pp. 80-82).

Marxian thought is unstable and ambivalent in almost all aspects of this problem: a problem which, in our view, is crucial not only to Marxism, Sociology of Knowledge and the social sciences but to modern consciousness (and knowledge) itself. First of all, (modern) physical sciences are fundamental to the social sciences in two ways: one, the theories of modern science about the physical universe,

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about matter and energy, about nature, about the human body (its physiology, anatomy, chemistry etc.) are to be necessarily accepted by them (if not as axiomatically true, then as the most advanced and best that are available). Their own study and understanding of man, his human-social world, his object-world and history must strictly move within the parameters of given physical science knowledge relating to all these matters. No human-social science can question them, formulate or accept alternative theories that are incompatible with those of modern physical sciences: moreover even theories and concepts not overlapping with the domain of physical sciences should not conflict with physical sciences insofar as they are related to them or presuppose them. Secondly, the model of objectivity must conform to the norms and principles accepted in the physical sciences, if not actually an adaptation of the physical science methodology and professional practices. (Objections to this statement will be considered presently: indeed they have been suggested *passim* in this very Essay.)

Marxian thought has a closer and more direct relation to modern physical and mathematical sciences: it claims its laws of history, economics as also its conceptual framework and theoretical system (theory of nature, theory of labour power, theory of exploitation, theory of revolutionary practice, etc.) to be as scientific as those of physical and mathematical sciences and based on physical and formal

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sciences where necessary. It would not be unfair or incorrect to say that the validity of modern Western science is a *sine qua non* for the validity of Marxism much more immediately than would be the case for non-Marxian social sciences; moreover Marxian thought requires the progress of physical sciences to conform to the fundamental ideas of Marxism, a requirement which, in this form, is not part of non-Marxian social sciences. Not all Marxian theoreticians would agree with the last point. In any case what this conformity means is far from clear. The famous Lysenko controversy in plant genetics could perhaps be a good illustration of the requirement of conformity; however, the theoretical and methodological issues arising out of this controversy were not consistently pursued by Soviet authorities, and hence it remains, perhaps, still unclear whether the conformity requirement is part of Marxian philosophy of modern science and, if so, what is its meaning. One could say perhaps the following: insofar as the theories and concepts of physical and biological sciences may have implications in the social-historical world, they must conform to the theories and concepts of Marxism since the latter's truth has already been established. Any inconsistency or lack of fit between the two would throw doubt on the truth or relevance (or both) of the theories concerned. This would obviously be a necessary requirement if one grants the eternal verity of the Marxian

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laws of history; in the absence of any such view of Marxian theory of man and his historical world, this requirement would mean that physical and biological sciences should be controlled by the prevailing Marxian orthodoxy.

If, however, the conformity requirement were dropped, other problems no less serious would arise. The most important one would be this : in the measure in which advances in the physical and biological sciences required revision or rejection of accepted Marxian theories and concepts, the social-historical world would be one built into the relationship of the social sciences to physical-biological sciences. This internal instability, in turn, raises two fundamental problems: can societies bear the tremendous cost—social, psychological, spiritual and economic technological—of this instability? And secondly, what would ensure that the needed revisions, rejections and new orientations would be forthcoming? And if they would not be, would not social scientific thought turn into an ideological system of thought, that is, one which did not reflect how things really and truly were?

Among the non-Marxian social scientists, Weber was perhaps most acutely aware of these problematics: it is clear that he despaired of a solution: one of his last essays, "Science as a Vocation" bears ample testimony to this. Marx himself was fully aware of these problematics, though not

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perhaps of some of the crucial difficulties of the solution he had in mind.

In Marxian thought the dichotomy of scientific and ideological consciousness (to which would correspond that of physical and social sciences) is a consequence (or correlate) of the alienation of man under the capitalistic form of modern civilization. With the conversion of human labour power into (market) commodity, man is alienated both from himself and from nature. According to Marx this double alienation is irresolvable within the capitalistic system; and, further, nature being alienated from the human-social realm, there is set up a permanent dichotomy between (physical) scientific knowing (and knowledge) which is free, veridical and certain, and social "scientific" knowledge which is distorted and determined by specific conditions of existence. The basis of this radical difference between the two sciences (more correctly between science and ideology; epistemology and sociology of knowledge) is the nature of the domains of the two studies: nature which is whole and hence can be seen as it is; and society which is fragmented and distorted by conflict between the existing and emerging socio-political forces. In other words, it is the fragmentation of the natural, technological-socio-historical whole that splits human consciousness thus giving rise not only to errors but falsifying consciousness itself. Marx sums it up most succinctly in a much-quoted familiar passage in the Preface

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to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859):

"From forms of development of the forces of production these relations turn into their fetters. Then comes the period of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations the distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic—in short ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so can we not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness; on the contrary, this consciousness must rather be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social forces of production and the relations of production."[32]

With the success of Marxian (or Communist) social revolution the normal relationship between forces of production (nature) and relations of production (the historical-social realm) begins to be restored at even higher levels of development and progress: nature and history now form an organic unity and accordingly there would now be

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only one science, the science of history which would include and assimilate natural science. With the development of this unified or master science of history, the problem of false consciousness, of unscientific forms of thought would be dissolved once and for all. (Accordingly, there would then be no possibility (or need) for any theory of ideology or sociology of knowledge; an end for all time to distortions of social perception and falsifications of consciousness.)

"The *natural sciences* have developed an enormous activity and have accumulated a constantly growing mass of material. Philosophy, however, has remained just as alien to them as they remain to philosophy. Their momentary unity was only a *chimerical illusion.* The will was there, but the means were lacking. Even historiography pays regard to natural science only occasionally, as a factor of enlightenment and utility arising from individual great discoveries. But natural science has invaded and transformed human life all the more *practically* through the medium of industry; and has prepared human emancipation, however directly and much it had to consummate dehumanization. *Industry* is the *actual*, historical relation of nature, and therefore of natural science, to man. If, therefore, industry is conceived as the *exoteric* revelation of man's *essential powers*, we also gain an understanding of the *human* essence of nature or the *natural* essence of man. In consequence, natural science will lose its abstractly

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material—or rather, its idealistic—tendency, and will become the basis of *human* science, as it has already become the basis of actual human life, albeit in an estranged form. *One* basis for life and other basis for *science* is *a priori* a lie. The nature which comes to be in human history—the genesis of human society—is man's *real* nature; hence nature as it comes to be through industry, even though in an *estranged* form, is true *anthropological* nature.

"Sense-perception (see Feuerbach) must be the basis of all science. Only when it proceeds from sense-perception in the twofold form both of *sensuous* consciousness and of *sensuous* need—that is, only when science proceeds from nature—is it *true* science. All history is the preparation for *"man"* to become the object of *Sensuous* consciousness, and for the needs of "man as man" to become [natural, sensuous] needs. History itself is a *real* part of *natural history*—of nature's coming to be man. Natural science will in Time subsume under itself the science of man, just as the science of man will subsume under itself natural science: there will be *one* science."[33]

The logic no less than the good will of this solution would be flawless and profound but for some strange and crucial blind spots: the alienation between man and his powers in Marxian thought is the matrix of all forms of alienation, contradiction, conflict, antithesis, and falsification of consciousness. This fundamental alienation is ultimately

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overcome by man (i) when he abolishes class divisions and frees society to wield its power and authority as a whole, so that the social possession and domination over man's (individual's) powers is a form of self-domination (freedom); and (ii) when man establishes complete dominion and domination over nature, abolishing altogether its independent existence: nature as pre-industrial nature, nature as a phenomenon ceases to exist ("Thus nature becomes one of the organs of his [man's] activity, which he annexes to his own bodily organs, adding stature to himself in spite of the Bible."[34]), just as history as the unforeseen and the unforeseeable, as fate, as the darker side of human action, as chance, as a discontinuity and an uprooting, will cease to exist: Man will have *complete* and absolutely certain knowledge and comprehension of the whole universe.

At such tremendous levels, it can never be a question of what Marx meant or how Marxists interpret this project. Marx's view of Nature and Science is central to Marxian thought: and it does entail man's power to create the universe anew, *ex nihilo*: a completely unintelligible idea as has been repeatedly argued in this Essay.

The second difficulty is the following: How is it possible for man to achieve free, non-ideological, veridical perception of nature during the "pre-historical", pre-Communist time, when nature is still alienated (firstly, because it is not yet wholly possessed by man and hence still

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survives as nature; and secondly, because it is not yet commonly seen by man as one of the *organs* of his activity)? And if this possibility were somehow allowed, what would prevent the same class of men from achieving a free and veridical view of their socio-political situation? In other words, what is posited here is that the falsification of consciousness under alienated capitalism is (providentially?) selective at two levels: (i) some men (Marx for example) always escape the falsifying forces; and (ii) those who cannot see socio-historical reality veridically do see nature freely, independent of the distorting social forces and succeed in acquiring universally valid knowledge of nature.

It is doubtful if there could be any real basis and justification for this postulate. What follows from the Marxian position (as set out above) is clearly that during man's alienated historical (or "pre-historical") existence, neither physical-biological "sciences" nor social-historical sciences, can be genuine, universal sciences. They are at this stage necessarily relativistic and hence only contingently true.

To accept this would not only be destructive of Marxism, it would be to eliminate the very possibility of its formulation as a theory and formation as a practice.

In order to see this it is necessary to note how the (long) transition from "pre-history" to history, from necessity to freedom, from capitalism to Communism is

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handled by the protagonist of the theory of unity of man and nature and the correlated unity of physical and social-historical sciences. Under the capitalistic mode of production, man and nature are antagonistically and exploitatively related, there is scarcely any awareness on the part of pre-Communist modern man that nature is his own body, no effective knowledge of the Marxian idea that industry and technology represent humanization of nature and naturalization of man. In all the violent changes that man has been effecting in nature and its processes, he experiences no self-transformation but a double victimization: first, nature is the victim of his own will-to-knowledge and greed; and then he himself is the victim of the irreversibility of the chain-consequences of his conquest of nature; an experience surely of nemesis not emancipation. Technological-industrial nature is through and through exploited, unpacified nature. Pre-Communist technology is anti-ecological: it is "absolute engineering" as Spengler puts it. Pre-communist physical science too is founded on this very view of man-nature relationship: its conceptual framework and, of course, its economic and cultural presuppositions and context support a *telos* of domination and an instrumental, atomistic approach—no other. If therefore the future Marxian unified science of history is to be founded on man's organic unity with nature, this will be possible only with the complete renunciation of physical-biological sciences in their present

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form, for they are based upon a false view of man-nature relationship. The physical-biological sciences are therefore ideological: for they are culturally determined by virtue of their epistemological-theoretical structure to serve the interests of an exploitative, oppressive society based on class-interests. As Marx himself powerfully puts it: "One basis for life and another basis for science is *a priori* a lie." A science, then, based on an adversary, exploitative relation between man and nature can only be a huge hindrance to a society based on equality, justice and organic unity of man and nature. It is naive and disastrously irresponsible to see the problem as one of use and control of science and technology. The crucial question is *what kind* of science is at the disposal of a society. It is really inexplicable that Marx could continue seeing science only in the mode of technology and technology only as a system of labour-saving mechanisms and as "absolute engineering".

Marcuse saw the need of a radically *new* physical science as the basis of an ecology-oriented technology for a non-exploitative, just and free (Communist) society. But he was taken to task for this by Habermas and subsequently Marcuse himself perhaps did not decide to pursue this truth.

Indeed the Marxian theory of physical science itself is ideological: it is a retrospective projection of the imagined future unified science of history and nature—a projection that would be possible if and only if one could virtually

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ignore, and ignore completely, the tremendous reality of the putative transitional stage. It must be added here that there are passages in *Capital* III to show that Marx was well-aware of residues of capitalism surviving powerfully in Communist society. He however remains strongly optimistic about the problem being resolved in due time. But the much more important point is that science (and technology too) is not a residue but the very basis of modern (capitalist) society: its continuance in a radically different and higher stage of history would endanger the very life of the new society.

In non-Marxian thought Edmund Husserl's optimism (and "great faith") counter-balances Max Weber's stoic despair. Formulating his position Husserl observes:

" "In-itself" means as much as "objective," at least in the way that the objective is opposed in the exact sciences to the merely subjective, the latter being understood as that which merely indicates something objective or that in which something objective is supposed merely to appear. It is merely a phenomenon of something objective; to come to know the objective by recognizing it within the phenomena and to determine it through objective concepts and truths, this is the task.

"But the sense of the task thus posed and of its presuppositions, that is, the presuppositions of all method, has never been seriously considered and itself investigated in

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a scientific manner, in an ultimately responsible manner, so that one has not even become clear on the fact that the sense of natural-scientific objectivity, or of the task and method of natural science, is fundamentally and essentially different from the sense of objectivity, task, and method in the humanistic disciplines. This is as true of psychology as it is of the so-called concrete humanistic disciplines. One has expected the same objectivity from psychology as from physics, and because of this a psychology in the full and actual sense has been quite impossible; for an objectivity after the fashion of natural science is downright absurd when applied to the soul, to subjectivity, whether as individual subjectivity, individual person, and individual life or as communally historical subjectivity, as social subjectivity in the broadest sense."[35]

Husserl is firmly maintaining the distinction between the physical and the social-historical sciences and affirming the autonomous scientific status of the latter, in this way refusing to transfer the problem to future. The crucial problem he finds is that of objectivity in social-historical disciplines which arises essentially from the fact that man being largely determined by the socio-cultural conditions of his existence cannot possibly take a view of his own situation absolutely free of this conditioning. He is denied access to the "in-itself" which the physical scientist has. Husserl argues that this problem is wholly the result of

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taking the concept and paradigm of objectivity from the physical and the exact sciences which simply cannot be applied to man's psychological and social-historical reality. Objectivity in the most rigorous sense can be achieved in the study of man, society and history by means of the phenomenological reduction performed in the framework of transcendental phenomenological theory of objectivity. The immediate question is about the relationship of the two realms: the natural and the psychological, social, historical. For if a basis for their internal unity is not found, the problem of double and divergent epistemologies remains even after the question of epistemology as Sociology of Knowledge has been rendered obsolete by the apodictic universality of phenomenological knowledge obtained through the method of epochē, a methodology that is claimed to be culture-free.

I am not clear about the nature of the unity of the natural and the historical in Husserl's thought. It seems to me that on the one hand, the phenomenology of nature and on the other, the phenomenology of physical and exact sciences will establish the internal unity of the natural and the historical realms. For Husserl, "Philosophy, science, is the title for a special class of cultural structures."[36] The cultural relativity of modern physical and exact sciences as that of the social and psychological sciences can be transcended according to Husserl by transcendental phenomenology

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(using the method of epochē and transcendental teleology of history).

In Husserl both physical and social-historical systems of thought and knowledge face the problem of cultural-historical determination, and hence they could and did lead to nihilistic relativism. As has just been pointed out, unlike the social scientists (both non-Marxian and Marxian), Husserl does not exempt modern physical, biological and formal-logical sciences from historico-cultural conditioning and relativization. What he has tried to do in a lifetime of unrelenting devotion to thought is to demonstrate that human Reason as it comes to maturity in modern European humanity has the power to undertake universal and infinite tasks. It is this Reason that he exempts from historico-cultural determination and it is to this (European) Reason that he assigns the task of achieving universal, apodictic knowledge for man.

The fundamental importance of Husserl lies in his claim that transcendental phenomenology alone can make possible an epistemology which is independent of Sociology of Knowledge (that is, independent of historical, psychological, social, cultural, economic and technological conditioning or determination); accordingly, transcendental phenomenology alone can save European civilization (and *eo ipso* human civilization) by the gift of universal apodictic knowledge..

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The question now is: Can this European Reason comprehend the history of its own determinations as well as itself: Can it comprehend and transcend, overcome, the dark, non-rational, non-scientific forces that have surrounded and still surround its power? This is the problem that was raised in passing in the second part of this Essay when it was asked whether unreason was a subordinate, marginal force within Reason or a coordinate, coeval and, in a sense, an independent force. This, in our view, is the central and crucial problem for all social sciences as well as philosophy and science; the rest of this Essay will be devoted to its examination.

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Part Five

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There have been great advances in the evolutionist thought in recent and contemporary times, and one could easily get the impression that nineteenth and early twentieth century social evolutionism and belief in universal progress have now been rendered obsolete by the latest refinements and complex ramifications of evolutionism. A critical survey of contemporary evolutionary thought (both in the social and biological sciences) cannot be undertaken here. It is, however, clear that some of the central ideas of evolutionism are still dominating modern thought and it has not been possible to view things *sub specie aeternitatis*. In other words, primitive/civilized remains, up-to-date, the central, formative dichotomy notwithstanding. It is, therefore, by no means flogging a dead horse to begin our critique of modern reason with an examination of the evolutionary perspective.

Evolutionary theory sees unreason (irrationality) as a stage in the evolutionary development of human reason. If this is so, the question immediately arises: how does one explain its survival right through the whole of evolutionary process up to the most "mature" and advanced stage of reason? Beyond the present stage of co-existence of unreason (and pre-reason) and reason, is there a coming stage when unreason will have been eliminated or, in any case, rendered strictly marginal? Marxism explicitly posits such a stage as part of its eschatology which includes the promise of the advent of a new man and a new society. The

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mediator between the present and the future is to be a radical and global political revolution. Meanwhile, the ruling party deals with the problem as one of transition—however long, ignoring the definite possibility that some of the transitional decisions and acts may have deleterious and irreversible consequences. The difficulty with such a position is that during this indefinitely long transition the vanguard of the ruling party deals with the problem of unreason by converting the future into the past, by making an unfulfilled promise the legitimate ground of acting as if it were already the bearer of a fulfilled reason and pacified nature and future.

Non-Marxian sociologies also posit the future absolutism of reason and scientific knowledge; the ground of this hope is however left unclear; in consequence, there has been in modern (non-Marxian) social sciences an undercurrent of pessimism and an ambivalence towards reason. And there is indeed ample basis for this anxiety. If the ground of hope is some law of progress, a kind of incorrigible belief that we live on an upward slope, or if it is faith in Reason's (supposedly) inherent power to attain sovereignty and autonomy, historical as well as contemporary experience is profoundly disturbing. Consider Mannheim's own theory that the relation or ratio between the spheres of reason (rationality) and unreason (irrationality) varies continually according to a law-like pattern. When reason is not expanding and claiming existing spheres of

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unreason, the latter (unreason) would be doing so and many spheres of reason would surrender and go under the domination of unreason. So Mannheim warns that reason has constantly to be expanding its dominion for there can never by any permanent jurisdictional peace treaty between reason and unreason. But this is not the most disturbing thing about Mannheim's theorem, for given reason's constant and vigilant dynamics, one may hope for its complete victory in course of time. What undermines all hope is the fact that every victory of reason over a given sphere of unreason can and often does uncover or produce fresh forms and fields of unreason.

It thus appears that unreason is not just an incapacity to reason or a deviation from it; it is an internal aspect of reason inherent in its very possibility; unreason is co-born and hence co-existent with reason, and is, in this sense, an independent force.

Though he does not clearly notice this, the irreducibility of unreason to reason (or of reason to unreason) is implicit in Mannheim's own theorem if it is taken to its logical extreme, for the theorem does suggest a permanent adversary relationship between reason and unreason; and a significant level of mutual independence is implicit in all such antagonistic relations. If we go back to the evolutionary theory of unreason as a stage in the maturation and advancement of reason, the ultimate triumph

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of reason over unreason follows: for the complete elimination of unreason is an immanent necessity of the evolutionary process itself. Even when the question, what evolves? has been ruled out as pre-scientific, it remains reasonable to point out that the distinction between reason and unreason can emerge only within *human* intelligence and hence must either be co-temporal with it or sublated in a supra-mental development, the scientific virtue of which, however, remains doubtful. In any case, so long as man remains on this side of supra-intelligence, unreason has to be reckoned with as a persistent and coordinate force.

A variation of the evolutionary theory is to regard the persistence of unreason not as a continuing transitional stage but as a throwback to an earlier institutional stage in the evolution of man. Thus unreason is an atavism, an eruption of primitive or animal instincts. Apart from the fact that there is no general theory explaining the occasion of these eruptions, its continued and increasingly powerful and complex survival in the face of unprecedented advancement and power of reason cannot be explained without involving some form of two (or multi) selves doctrine which, in turn, requires a hierarchical theory of human personality. Such a doctrine is essentially incompatible with mainstream evolutionary theory, though there have been some recent attempts to integrate the concept of hierarchy with the basic tenets of evolutionism. We cannot examine this issue here, but it may be repeated that the theory of higher and lower

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selves of man if integrated into modern social science would lead to a radical change in its nature and *telos*. If, therefore, consistent with the postulates of modern social science, the co-existence of two or more selves in man is seen historically and in a linear, horizontal perspective, unreason appears as a coordinate force with reason; its instinctual genesis becomes irrelevant since in the evolutionary theory instinct would have to be the common matrix of both reason and unreason.

It is therefore not surprising to find Weber so pessimistic about the power (and ultimate triumph) of reason. Nor should one find it odd that Pareto, the propounder of logic-experimental method, should place non-logical conduct (and the theory of the derivative, residues and derivations) in the very centre of his general sociology; indeed the vogue of unreason in social science can be traced to its beginnings: we have the Humean concept of habit and subsequently the theory of sentiments as the foundation of society, and the religion of humanity as integral parts of Comte's positivism which at the same time glorifies reason, science, technology and industry. And yet unreason as the coordinate and, in significant ways, independent force to reason has yet to be *centrally* recognized by the social sciences with all its drastic consequences.

In 1844, Søren Kierkegaard wrote: "The supreme paradox of all thought is the attempt to discover something that thought cannot think. This passion is at bottom present

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in all thinking, even in the thinking of the individual, in so far as in thinking he participates in something transcending himself. But habit dulls our sensibilities, and prevents us from perceiving it."[37]

The unthinkable (and the unthought) is a huge, fundamental category; unreason (as also the unconscious) is only one of its modes. (It is necessary to observe here that unreason and the unconscious represent relatively lower modes of the unthinkable; in this Essay, however, it is not proposed to argue the hierarchical structure of the unthinkable. The problematics of the unthinkable are rather a strange sort of enterprise for all attempts to explicate it must run into obvious, insuperable difficulties.) And if, as Kierkegaard points out, thought is for ever colliding with the unthinkable, the Unknown, it is clear that unreason as a mode of the unthinkable cannot be reduced to reason or thought. The ultimate sovereignty and autonomy (and triumph) of reason—the modern monism of Reason—can thus be seen to have no foundation in history, logic or dialectics.

The question, Is unreason a coordinate but opposed force to reason? (raised on p. 43) has often been posed but social scientists have avoided to take it seriously. It is in 1966 that it assumes central importance in the work of Michel Foucault (1926-1984) and to him we now turn.

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Part Six

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"Man has not been able to describe himself as a configuration in the *episteme* without thought at the same time discovering, both in itself and outside itself, at its borders yet also in its very warp and woof, an element of darkness, an apparently inert density in which it is embedded, an unthought which it contains entirely, yet in which it is also caught."[38]

Once again, following Kierkegaard, the ideas of the unthought (the unthinkable, the dark, the inert density) suggest a vast and profound stratum to which unreason and the unconscious belong or of which they are one of the several dimensions: indeed though this "dark", this "inert density", this "Other" is the womb of unreason, of the unconscious, *ex hypothesi* there is no way of describing clearly and precisely its nature or its relation to its "creatures", "aspects", "parts" or "dimensions"; the spatial metaphor itself can be distorting unless understood as a figure of *thought.* And yet the chaos, the darker side of dawn, has been a central insight of traditional thinking. It is only the modern *episteme* which resents it and promises to eliminate it once and for all.

The great importance of Foucault's straightforward recognition of the omnipresent and irreducible reality of the dark lies in the fact that he has gone a far longer way in following its logic than most others. His insight into the true relationship of reason and unreason, sanity and madness,

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originates from his *Madness and Civilization* (1965; French original, 1961). In a deepened form it was systematically formulated five years later in *The Order of Things* (1970; French original, 1966). Foucault attempts here a synoptic review of post-mediaeval Western civilization through what he calls a general history of thought distinguishing it from a universal or totalizing history. He shows this period to be divided by three fundamentally different *epistemes*, that is, man's noetic attitudes to reality and himself: Renaissance (1500—ca. 1660), Classical (ca. 1660—ca. 1800) and Modern (ca. 1880—ca. 1950). The central epistemic principle was Resemblance during the Middle Age up to the Renaissance; Representation during the Classical; and Anthropology (analytic of finitude, will to knowledge) during the Modern. Foucault looks at the Modern age in contrast to and in discontinuity with the classical. During the classical age the doctrine of the Great Chain of Being is still not discarded; the world (and man) is created by God. Man is not yet "*the* maker, *the* artificer—God—but as the locus of clarification, he was *an* artificer. There was a world created by God, existing by itself. The role of man was to clarify the order of the world."[39]

At the beginning of the modern age—around 1790 according to Foucault—the order of the world ceases to be seen as God-given. Profound, far-reaching and unprecedented consequences follow. Man is now no longer

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a being among others. He is a subject among what are objects to him. And as the subject, the knower, he has to know the world, for both practical and theoretical reasons. Cut off from the Infinite—God—with which man is necessarily connected in a God-given world and its order, man now sees—has to see—that he is also an object, "thrown into the world", and as such has himself to acquire knowledge of himself for with the world no longer given by God, man cannot have a knowledge of himself as a gift from Above. The essential, unique theme of the modern age is thus of "an individual who lives, speaks, and works in accordance with the laws of an economics, a philology, and a biology, but who also, by a sort of internal torsion and overlapping, has acquired the right, through the interplay of those very laws, to know them and to subject them to total clarification . . ."[40]

Foucault makes two points: first: when, with the death of God and the end of the universe as a hierophany, man becomes an object among objects and at the same time a subject as well, his knowledge of himself cannot be of the order of self-knowledge because, already an object, he must know himself as an object. In other words, human sciences in the age of modernity must presuppose and actively advance, in the mode of "*science*", the process of man's self-objectification. Second: he is bound to strict scientific laws in all the major areas of his life; and yet he can know them

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and attain mastery over his life and his world by virtue of his knowledge. Modern thought is unique in inventing an analytic "in which man's being will be able to provide a foundation in their own positivity for all those forms that indicate to him that he is not infinite."[41] "Our culture," says Foucault, "crossed the threshold beyond which we recognize our modernity when finitude was conceived in an interminable cross-reference with itself."[42]

For Foucault, the modern world being anthropocentric all social science thought is essentially anthropological and repeatedly an elaboration in varying forms of the analytic of finitude. The progress of social science thought is the story of a variously repeated entanglement in three overlapping doubles from which it has not been able to free itself. And cannot. The three doubles are: the Empirical—the Transcendental; The *Cogito*—the Unthought; The Retreat and the Return of the Origin.

(I) *The Empirico—Transcendental Doublet* : In the situation created by the loss of (or, to use modernese, emancipation from) a God-given world with a hierarchical order, the very idea of Man as Knower becomes a huge, densely complicated problem. Since man is an object and as object is precisely that which either does not have any knowledge of itself and other objects or whose knowledge does not matter or matters only as a symptom, man as knower becomes transcendent to the object of his knowledge

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and in the case of human-social sciences, to himself as well. Again, since the transcendental in an absolute, hieratic sense is ruled out, all transcendence must necessarily resolve into empiricism unless used purely as a formal concept. By a brilliant, penetrating analysis of all the different solutions to this problem—Kantian, Marxian, phenomenological, hermeneutic, structural, linguistic, psychoanalytic—Foucault shows that the tension generated by the discontinuity of the empirical and the transcendental continues unabated. And for a very simple reason. Encapsulated in Foucault's imaginative and profound terminology, it is this: in the age of modernity man doubles as an object and subject, slave and sovereign. An apt analogy to illustrate Foucault's insight would be a drama where the same man or woman plays a double role, say, of two important characters, father and son or mother and daughter. The fact of such identity of the two characters cannot be revealed: no *dramaturgic* statement of this identity is possible; for dramaturgically such a statement would be a statement of the identity of the roles themselves which would destroy the drama. The identity of the doubles can be revealed and stated only in real life, off stage: and it is pre-stage and post-stage from which the identity originates and to which it returns. Within the drama the double role means an unredeemable split. When man becomes both the subject and object of knowledge, the knower and the known in an anthropological universe, the split, the objectification

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cannot be restored—it is like a drama which has neither a greenroom nor any off-stage. (Of course, the problem then becomes how would the doubling be possible at all—and this precisely is Foucault's point.)

Elaborating his argument further, Foucault refers to Kant's celebrated solution in terms of the distinction between the form and content of knowledge. The senses are certainly the source of human knowledge but they give only the content, the organizing forms come from the human mind which are universal and remain invariant. The transcendent is thus preserved without recourse to any transrational, transhuman dimension. Or—and this is more immediately relevant to the central problem of Sociology of Knowledge—the transcendental dimension, the redemption of the knower from the transience, confusion and contingency of sense-experience, can be sought in history: universal history of human thought would reveal the invariant forms and laws of human mind and knowledge. Foucault points out that all such positions, historiological, phenomenological or sociological assume that there is some scientific or pure truth accessible and communicable through the neutral course of one of these disciplines. But this is impossible. If, argues Foucault, the truth of categories in terms of which nature or history is described, or understood and explained is independent of all concepts, of all pre-understanding, then such an absolutely direct contact with

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reality is a fiction; and if the truth depends on the pre-supposed truth of other categories, we are back in an endless regress. The only other alternative is that the truth is produced and guaranteed by the discourse itself. "Comte and Marx both bear out the fact that eschatology (as the objective truth proceeding from man's discourse) and positivism (as the truth of discourse defined on the basis of the truth of the object) are archaeologically indissociable: a discourse attempting to be both empirical and critical cannot but be both positivist and eschatological; man appears within it as a truth both reduced and promised. Pre-critical naïveté holds undivided rule."[43]

Positivism and eschatology do not go together; but a positivity as such is without meaning and value; only in an eschatological mode can it become, in the modern age, meaningful and valuable. Positivism thus becomes untenable for eschatology entails a vision of reality as a whole, and is, strictly speaking, a transhuman category. If this is clearly seen, it will immediately appear that there is no possibility of any sociology of knowledge except in a metaphysical spirit and framework. As Foucault beautifully puts it, in the modern age man is reduced to his empirical, opaque self: the restoration of his full humanity depends on his own promise. This promise, like all promises, is predicted upon either God's grace which is banished from the social science world; or on the knowledge of the whole

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reality both in time and space, which is virtually an impossibility. This is what Foucault sees as one of the central dilemmas inherent in modern man's noetic and practical relationship to the world quite apart from the dilemmas of objectification.

(II) *The Cogito and the Unthought*: Man is born and he lives and dies in a given world. This is perhaps the simplest, apparently utterly trivial and, quite literally, an absolutely incontrovertible statement about man—ourselves—and the basic human condition. From the modern scientific standpoint there can be no situation in which other men and a world of other creatures (in any case, other evolutes, if such a word exists) did not already exist when one is born: indeed to conceive of such a situation is precisely to conceive of *creatio ex nihilo*. Man as an unaided knower, thrown wholly on his own powers, creative and inherited, must therefore find himself in a situation that in every way and forever exceeds him: the world, in a most substantial sense, precedes him in its wholeness and independence: the relationship of any contemporary collectivity to the history into which it is placed is always asymmetrical; a hero or a given collectivity cannot affect history strictly so-called, it can change only the supposed future; to the already given historical situation these changes are irrelevant, and hence not necessarily required by it. This is brilliantly shown by Foucault in his reflections on labour,

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life, and language. However, man cannot dispense with some understanding of his world and history extending infinitely into the past and presumably into the future because such (limited) knowledge and understanding is the very condition of *human* experience and action. However, if, as we find in the modern and contemporary age, a collectivity or an elite wants to make history to its own desire, a *complete and clear* knowledge of the pre-given world and its history is a *sine qua non.*

Such knowledge (and understanding) is impossible. Either this knowledge comes to man in its wholeness and absoluteness (whatever the abstract, generic, specific word man may mean in these contexts) in *one* flash as in the myth of the Buddha, or it must be piecemeal—no matter how comprehensive even sweeping the pieces may be. Foucault points out, in a manner that is decisive, that in a situation like this every act of intellectual appropriation will leave out what he calls the unthought, an unknown, because these will represent the givenness, the presuppositions, the contexts, the horizons forming the conditions of possibility of knowledge and understanding. Just these, of course, may be appropriated in a fresh intellectual attempt, which however must involve a fresh unthought. It is an endless process in which there would always be a residue. In other words, the unknown, the unthought leads to the unknowable of which it appears an aspect, a signature. The knowing, thinking man

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cannot ever achieve total clarification of the laws of labour, life, language, and its product, history in which he is involved: the other side of the *cogito*, the dark, the irrational, the unwilled, exists unceasingly with all its uncanny power over man.

Foucault thinks that phenomenology has appreciated the crux and complexity of the problem of the unthought far better than most schools. But it fails. "In Husserl's analyses it [the unthought] was the implicit, the inactual, the sedimented, the non-effected—in every case, the inexhaustible double that presents itself to reflection as the blurred projection of what man is in his truth, but that also plays the role of preliminary ground upon which man must collect himself and recall himself in order to attain his truth."[44] Foucault unerringly saw that Husserl wanted to revive "the deepest vocation of the Western *ratio*, bending it back upon itself in a reflection which is a radicalization of pure philosophy and a basis for the possibility of its own history."[45] In other words, the subtleties and sophistications of phenomenology and its methods prove inadequate to the contradiction inherent in the modern *cogito*, namely *total* clarification and mastery of the very laws that are supposed to govern the nature and working of human life and *thinking*. In the study of history, particularly in the study of ideas which represent *theories* (in the original Greek sense of the term) and not mental cogitations (in the Cartesian heritage),

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what this means is an impossible feat which the phenomenologist claims to perform, namely, that of standing fully inside and fully outside his own cultural and perceptual field.

It may be added that the *sine qua non* of the method of reductions and bracketings is the distinction between essence and accident, a distinction that no doubt has a long "tradition" and is, moreover, justified by a kind of self-evidence of the natural attitude. The distinction is, however, context-variable and the problem of the coherence of essence and accident, substance and attribute, has no positive, formal or phenomenological solution—that is, one which will not involve a *petitio principii* or infinite regress. All sociology of knowledge—and all modern social science—operates implicitly (sometimes explicitly too) on this very distinction, which, like phenomenology, it tends to treat as context-neutral. Again the Marxian theory of "economic determination in the last analysis", in fact any ultimate explanatory monism, implies the same distinction transposed to the temporal level and, with its problematics sometimes called the problem of mediation, left ultimately unresolved. Husserl's phenomenology, whatever its level of abstraction and sophistication, is centred in modern Western culture (or, to use his own word, *ratio*) and hence fails to deal adequately with the nature of essence—accident distinction as also with the problematics of their coherence. This critique is

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epitomized in a beautiful Musil *sutra*: "that the green grass is simply as green as grass." (". . . dass grünes Gras eben grasgrün ist.") Ulrich, the hero of Musil's *magnum opus*, *The Man Without Qualities*, knows that even if as a competent mathematician he could calculate with precision the exact amount of greenness in a lawn, there would nevertheless remain an unspannable chasm between this measured, cognitively comprehended (not to say conquered) reality and the created phenomena as they are: the one aspect muted the other afraid but still eloquent.

On the level of practice whose determining or constitutive relation (dialectical or non-dialectical) with knowledge or discourse is the basis of all theories of ideology and Sociology of Knowledge, the unthought could be coped with by a complete analysis of all the bases, pre-suppositions and forces that form and support given configurations of human practices. Here the dilemma is even worse: apart from the huge difficulty of attaining objectivity and certainty in such analyses—for the analyzing consciousness is *ex hypothesi* affected by the very practice being analyzed—to attain a complete and clear analysis would also be the end of the practice; the actors, having transcended the realm of action and turned themselves into pure spectators, can no longer return to acting. Dreyfus and Rabinow sum up the situation superbly:

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"In sum, discourse about man faces the following dilemma: the background of taken-for-granted commitments and practices, precisely because it is unthought, makes thought and action possible, but it also puts their source and meaning out of our control. The attempt to reappropriate the background, however, is doomed to dis-illusionment; first there is the inevitable dissatisfaction with the Sisyphus-like task of clarifying the background as an infinite set of beliefs each of which itself makes sense only against a further background. This is a task which is popular right now as part of the attempt to treat man as an "information processing system," but it is a task which, as Foucault points out, can at best claim "the monotony of a journey which, though it probably has no end, is nevertheless perhaps not without hope" (*The Order of Things*, 314). And second there is the despair of nihilism, for, if the background could be totally clarified, objectified, and represented, the resulting overcoming of enslavement and superstition, far from being a triumph, would spell the end of meaningful action."[46]

(III) *The Retreat and the Return of the Origin:* The third aspect of the analytic of finitude and the principle of historicity which replaces the theory of representation at the beginning of the modern age is the problematics of the origin. Both history and evolutionism, each in its own way, require the search for origins; if man's "essence" is historical, that is, if he has no nature but only a history,

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finitude is his fundamental condition and the origin of man (if not his end as well) must be discovered and established in history. Foucault reviews, with special reference to Heidegger, the formulation of this problem and the unacknowledged duality (or more truly, duplicity) of empirical—transcendental (or positive—fundamental) discovered in all modern social science thought; Foucault distinguishes between the empirico-historical and the logico-ontological origins of man's historical practices. If modern thought were consistent with its principles it will reject every notion of the origin except the empirico-historical; but even in seeking a historical origin, it will have to define the origin ahistorically in order to identify it, for an origin, discovered in a remote past, would be necessarily highly dissimilar to its later developments. And even if one took a logical and ontological view of the question of the origin, there will be perhaps a more serious problem: the first must always be fundamentally different from all other members of the series. The differences between the first and the second is logically and qualitatively infinite. But modern social science, if I understand it at all, has no place whatsoever for this difference. So the problem is (i) to locate the origin in history and (ii) to explain the discontinuity between the origin and its subsequent history. Apart from the fact that the historical origin has proved to be ever receding, there are no beginnings in history (nor, of course, *of* history). In the

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absolute sense, a beginning must, paradoxically, lie, or begin, outside time; and yet be *in* time. A beginning, as origin, is an extremely difficult and even incoherent concept; it is as much a temporal as an atemporal concept. Considered in a relative sense, every origin would be seen bound up with so many other events that, defined in isolation, the origin can be only a conventional or postulated event. This is why Foucault shows that this is the third major double central to modern sciences of man and society, for it can only be either the historical "origin" doubling as the logico-ontological or, the other way round, the ahistorical arbitrarily reduced and postulated as historico-empirical. In traditional thinking, all beginnings are mythical and their representation a ritual.

Foucault gives serious consideration to Heidegger's celebrated attempt to grapple with this problem. As far as man may go back in the past, he finds that he is "Always already in the world", in language, in society and in nature. According to Foucault's gloss: "Man is cut off from the origin that would make him contemporaneous with his own existence: amid all the things that are born in time and no doubt die in time, he, cut off from all origin, is already there."[47] Following Heidegger, Foucault suggests that instead of conceiving the origin as a point in time, as a sort of cut made at some given moment in duration, we should think of man himself as "the opening from which time in

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general can be reconstituted, duration can flow, and things, at the appropriate moment, can make their appearance."[48] The origin should therefore be identified in man's historicizing practices, more specifically in his object-creating practices, the sphere of *technē*. The underlying idea is that man in-the-world is *ab initio* a transcendent being since he has a surpassing relationship to the objects among which he is placed. There is, in other words, no history of the natural world; only of the human world.

However sophisticated, Foucault does not find this satisfactory. The historicizing practices, the manifestations of man the maker themselves have a history and hence the problem of origin appears once again; besides, the implied or pre-supposed equation of man with his work, even if in a limited context, prejudices the integrity and universality of this approach.

Independently of Foucault, the provinciality of the Husserlian approach can be seen from the fact that not all societies are history-conscious. The question of origin is nevertheless central to them as well. But they find their origin in mythological time: that is, for them the idea of origin is *ab initio* atemporal; indeed this atemporal vision, this gifted knowledge of the origin, penetrates their whole life and "history". The history of historicizing cultural practices cannot go beyond the historical times, and pre-history cannot be excluded, for the distinction between the

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historical and pre-historical time is both arbitrary and tautological. The quest for the historically retreating origin can be redeemed not in history but in myth; but modern thought itself being a repudiation of myth, social sciences cannot comprehend myth, only appreciate it in a kind of arbitrary reduction or illicit doubling (cf. the Freudian myth of the Primal Hoard).

Foucault is, therefore, very right in concluding that the source of man's meaning is denied to modern man, his social sciences and philosophies both being a story of this failure. Here "we find the experience of Hölderlin, Nietzsche, and Heidegger, in which the return is posited only in the extreme recession of the origin". It is the story, the nearly despairing experience of "that ceaseless rending open which frees the origin in exactly that degree to which it recedes. . . ."[49]

In a final ironic twist modern man now claims that the meaning of human history in terms of its origin is that which is always yet to be understood. "The origin, becoming what thought has yet to think, and always afresh, would be forever promised in an imminence always nearer yet never accomplished. In that case the origin is that which is returning, the repetition towards which thought is moving, the return of that which has already always begun, the proximity of a light that has been shining since the beginning

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of time."[50] The disowned mythological, the rejected transcendental now returns with a futurological mask.

Is it not that the "quest for origins" has already been left behind by the advancement of the human sciences? Do not the structurist, hermeneutic and phenomenological schools of sociology, social anthropology and politics and systems-analysis render the problematics of the origin entirely irrelevant, indeed, a hangover of metaphysical thought?

Why then does Foucault revive it and move it into the centre?

Because Foucault tries to show that anthropological thought (that is, roughly, the man-centred "world-view") is paradigmatic of the whole age of modernity, evolutionism and historiology representing only the inner necessity of this mode of thought. With the final passing of the cosmological, suprahumanly given natural and socio-cultural order—which, according to Foucault, still lingers on in the classical age of representation—man can find meaning and order nowhere but in history which is the only transcendent, the only absolute given that can be positivistically acknowledged by man and his newly created social science. At the same time, cut off from the transhuman Absolute man can conceive of himself only in his finitude and so has no option but to attempt to found himself and his knowledge on this finitude itself. Foucault accordingly shows that all modern

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human (social) sciences are essentially an analytic (in the Kantian sense) of finitude. Some historiographies and philosophies of history may claim to be free from the quest for origins; in Foucault's archaeological analysis, the quest for origins, under one mask or another, remains central to social and historical sciences and doomed.

At the same time Foucault does not see much hope in the apparent independence from anthropologism found in some of the formalist (structurist) and hermeneutical schools. From the archaeological standpoint, these schools regardless of their proclaimed aims and methods are firmly situated within the modern anthropological *episteme*: "It is, in fact, the strict unfolding of Western culture in accordance with the necessity it imposed upon itself at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It would be false to see in this general indication of our experience, which may be termed 'formalism', the sign of a drying up, of a rarefaction of thought losing its capacity for re-apprehending the plenitude of contents; it would be no less false to place it from the outset upon the horizon of some new thought or new knowledge. It is within the very tight-knit, very coherent outlines of the modern *episteme* that this contemporary experience found its possibility".[51]

In order to complete his critique of the analytic of finitude designed to demolish the social (human) sciences and, of course, all sociology of knowledge, Foucault

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specially examines the rather strange case of two much vaunted and the most deeply and universally influential "social sciences": Psychoanalysis and Ethnology (Social Anthropology). Both are essentially—or should one say, archaeologically—the same "science", being two modes and levels of the manifestation of the monism of Western *Ratio* (or better, of the historicist monist absolutism of Western *Ratio*): psychoanalysis represents this monistic absolutism by the conquest of the unconscious either through its therapeutic silencing or through its promise of total liberation; ethnology represents this monism of reason through the conquest of the inter-cultural other. In truth, the two conquests are two dimensions of a single modern project: the conquest and abolition of History. Betraying their true vocations psychologists participate at the synchronic level in the accomplishment of this gigantic perversity. Psychoanalysis reduces social action to social engineering, human suffering to pathology, repentance to psychiatric self-examination, redemption to therapeutically managed social adjustment; ethnology subjugates the different to the putative evolutionary latest (and hence, the highest) and reduces destiny to an everlasting transition through a Gellnerian asymmetrical solution of cultural relativity.

Except for its failure, universalistic imperialism is timeless ("And they lived happily ever after"). In the

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modern age "the utopia is concerned with the final decline of time rather than with its morning: this is because knowledge is no longer constituted in the form of a table but in that of a series, of sequential connection, and of development: when, with the promised evening, the shadow of the *dénouement* comes, the slow erosion or violent eruption of History will cause man's anthropological truth to spring forth in its stony immobility; calendar time will be able to continue; but it will be, as it were, void, for historicity will have been superimposed exactly upon the human essence. The flow of development, with all its resources of drama, oblivion, alienation, will be held within an anthropological finitude which finds in them, in turn, its own illuminated expression. *Finitude*, with its truth, is posited in *time*; and *time* is therefore *finite*. The great dream of an end to History is the utopia of causal systems of thought, just as the dream of the world's beginnings was the utopia of the classifying systems of thought."[52]

Sociology of Knowledge is a kind of unified or general discipline appropriating the resources of both psychoanalysis and ethnology, and serving the central modern project of the abolition of History. It should therefore be no surprise to find Karl Mannheim envisaging the possibility of an age of "administration", to follow an age of planning during which "all or most of the historical forces

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which have arisen in the struggle have been brought under control through strategy" and "all that we now call history, the unforeseeable, fateful dominance of uncontrolled social force will (have) come to an end." Again, it is natural that there should be hints that just before his untimely death in 1947, Mannheim was considering, perhaps following a Comtean idea (Religion of Humanity), the possibility of sociology as the "new" religion of democracy.

Marx may seem incompatible with the abolition of History project. But Foucault has tried to show that "Marxism exists in nineteenth century thought like a fish in water: that is, it is unable to breathe anywhere else."[53] And accordingly both nineteenth century bourgeois economics and nineteenth century revolutionary economics were produced by the internal logic of anthropological thought which is at the centre of the modern age. Marx shares in the strange modern idolization of both—Science-Technology and History. The two, it is plain, are fundamentally incompatible with each other, for it is precisely the dark forces of time and history that science and technology have to comprehend and conquer apart, of course, from creating a new earth under a new heaven.[54] Indeed it is for the failure to understand and tame these forces that all history up-to-date is called pre-history by Marx. It would be a serious error to play down the importance of this distinction. The history proper that would begin with the advent of

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communism is to be so radically discontinuous with all that precedes it that all previous history must appear as pre-historical. And the future "history" is to be the history of a new "man" who would be the master of nature and history: it is an idea so completely unintelligible that it really does not matter what name we give to its working or manifestation.

Psychoanalysis and ethnology are strange sciences. In his monograph on Foucault, Alan Sheridan notes that by situating itself in the dimension of the unconscious, psycho-analysis disturbs the whole domain of the human sciences from within, and situating itself in the dimension of historicity, ethnology challenges the human sciences by reference to their relativity. "What ethnology and psycho-analysis share is not some concern to penetrate the depths of human nature, but rather a common position in relation to the modern notion of 'man'. They stand at the frontier, as it were, between man and that 'Otherness' that undermines the entire concept of man as a unitary, knowable being. They are not so much human sciences that take up their positions among others, as two 'counter-sciences' that traverse penetrate the entire domain of the human sciences, bringing them back to their epistemological foundation, unmaking that very man who constitutes their ground."[55] Foucault's own observations on psychoanalysis show how this "counter-science" itself shares the fundamental assumptions of the modern human sciences and gets trapped in the same

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failures: "Psychoanalysis advances and leaps over representation, overflows it on the side of finitude, and thus reveals, where one had expected functions bearing their norms, conflicts burdened with rules, and significations forming a system, the simple fact that it is possible for there to be system (therefore signification), rule (therefore conflict), norm (therefore function). And in this region where representation remains in suspense, on the edge of itself, open, in a sense, to the closed boundary of finitude, we find outlined the three figures by means of which life, with its functions and norms, attains its foundation in the mute repetition of Death, conflicts and rules their foundation in the naked opening of Desire, significations and systems their foundation in a language which is at the same time Law. We know that psychologists and philosophers have dismissed all this as Freudian mythology. . . . But when one follows the movement of psychoanalysis as it progresses, or when one traverses the epistemological space as a whole, one sees that these figures are in fact—though imaginary no doubt to the myopic gaze—the very forms of finitude, as it is analysed in modern thought. Is death not that upon the basis of which knowledge in general is possible—so much so that we can think of it as being, in the area of psychoanalysis, the figure of that empirico-transcendental *duplication* that characterizes man's mode of being within finitude? Is desire not that which remains always *unthought* at the heart

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of thought? And the law-language (at once word and word-system) that psychoanalysis takes such pains to make speak, is it not that in which all signification assumes an *origin* more distant than itself, but also that whose return is promised in the very act of analysis? It is indeed true that this Death, and this Desire, and this Law can never meet within the knowledge that traverses in its positivity the empirical domain of man; but the reason for this is that they designate the conditions of possibility of all knowledge about man."[56]

With this devastating critique of the "counter-sciences", psychoanalysis and ethnology [57] which can indeed survive as *human social science* only on pain of violating their vocations, Foucault is ready to announce not only the complete failure of the sciences of man, society and history but also the end of man and the modern Western *episteme*: "Rather than the death of God—or, rather, in the wake of that death and in a profound correlation with it—what Nietzsche's thought heralds is the end of his murderer; it is the explosion of man's face in laughter, and the return of masks . . . Throughout the nineteenth century, the end of philosophy and the promise of an approaching culture were no doubt one and the same thing as the thought of finitude and the appearance of man in the field of knowledge; in our day, the fact that philosophy is still—and again—in the process of coming to an end, and the fact that in it perhaps,

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though even more outside and against it, in literature as well as in formal reflection, the question of language is being posed, prove no doubt that man is in the process of disappearing.

"For the entire modern *episteme*—that which was formed towards the end of the eighteenth century and still serves as the positive ground of our knowledge, that which constituted man's particular mode of being and the possibility of knowing him empirically—that entire *episteme* was bound up with the disappearance of Discourse and its featureless reign, with the shift of language towards objectivity, and with its reappearance in multiple form. If this same language is now emerging with greater and greater insistence in a unity that we ought to think but cannot as yet do so, is this not the sign that the whole of this configuration is now about to topple, and that man is in the process of perishing as the being of language continues to shine ever brighter upon our horizon? Since man was constituted at a time when language was doomed to dispersion, will he not be dispersed when language regains its unity? And if that were true, would it not be an error—a profound error, since it could hide from us what should now be thought—to interpret our actual experience as an application of the forms of language to the human order? Ought we not rather to give up thinking of man, or, to be more strict, to think of this disappearance of man—and the ground of possibility of all

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the sciences of man—as closely as possible in correlation with our concern with language? Ought we not to admit that, since language is here once more, man will return to that serene non-existence in which he was formerly maintained by the imperious unity of Discourse? Man had been a figure occurring between two modes of language; or, rather, he was constituted only when language, having been situated within representation and, as it were, dissolved in it, freed itself from that situation at the cost of its own fragmentation: man composed his own figure in the interstices of that fragmented language. . . .

" . . . . As the archaeology of our thought easily shows, man is an invention of recent date. And one perhaps one nearing its end.

"If those arrangements were to disappear as they appeared, if some event of which we can at the moment do no more than sense the possibility—without knowing either what its form will be or what it promises—were to cause them to crumble, as the ground of Classical thought did, at the end of the eighteenth century, then one can certainly wager that man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea."[58]

If the final outcome of Foucault's rigorous and relentless "archaeology of the human sciences" looks too bad to be really warranted, it is only because the logic of his analysis and the integrity of his intellectual character at this

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stage leave him no escape from the radically negative—not to say nihilistic—verdict on modern Western knowledge and civilization flowing not only from *The Order of Things* (1970; French original, 1966) but equally from his earlier works, *Madness and Civilization* (1965; French original 1961) and *The Birth of the Clinic* (1973; French original 1963). In his first major and seminal work Foucault observed:

"The possibility for man of being mad and the possibility of being an object were joined together at the end of the eighteenth century, and this encounter gave birth at one and the same time (it is not a case of coincidence here) to the postulates of positive psychiatry and to the theme of an objective science of man. . . . Positivism was not only a theoretical project, but the stigma of alienated existence. The status of object will be imposed from the outset on any individual recognised as insane; insanity will be inscribed as a secret truth at the heart of all objective knowledge of man."[59]

There can scarcely be a more devastating and definitive verdict on modern social science. It is doomed (period): violated and falsified at its very foundation. The specific relevance of Foucaldian archaeology of modern knowledge for our present concern lies firstly in its showing that the post-anthropological philosophies like structuralism, phenomenology, hermeneutics and semiology are all firmly

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situated within the anthropocentric modern *episteme* and involve, quite centrally, the still active residues of anthropologism they are designed to overcome. They have, thus, been powerless to resolve the problematics of the Other, the Unthought. Secondly, Foucault's archaeology of modern knowledge demolishes, through a powerful and vigorously internal critique, the very possibility of a sociology (and psychology) of knowledge which, as we have argued, must form the foundation of sociology and other social sciences.

Let us recapitulate the basic tasks, the central problems, Sociology of Knowledge assigns to itself. As was observed at the beginning of this Essay it is the discontinuity between knowledge and reality, thought and action, that creates need and possibility for Sociology of Knowledge as also that for positivistic social sciences in an age which rejects the idea of the universe and the social order as a hierophany. If thought and action, word and deed, theoria and praxis were continuous in the sense that every thought, every word instantaneously and by its own power would be transformed into the corresponding deed and every deed would be immediately eloquent, the question of truth (and falsehood) would be precluded assuming, of course, that man and the human world could survive in this absolutely transparent and monistic universe, or at a deeper level, that manifestation without duality was an intelligible

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idea. There would then be no need or possibility of any science, natural or social for all science and art is founded in the impossibility (more correctly, in the unintelligibility of the ideas) of omniscience and omnipotence.

The primordial unity of word and deed, spirit and breath is or can be predicated of God alone—the idea of such unity is, of course, unintelligible. In man this absolute unity is sundered; indeed the possibility of a human world is posited only with this rupture, this sundering, this primordial violence. Man's speech *qua* human will always be other than thought, thought incommensurate with action; initial action always incommensurate with its consequences. It is because the spheres of action and history as also of nature are not immediately transparent but in principle opaque that social and physical sciences are needed and possible. Further the universe of thought and speech (discourse, writing) is not autonomous, nor is it immediately and everlastingly legible and intelligible; for if discourse were autonomous and immediately eloquent, its truth would be guaranteed and the human sciences would be neither needed nor possible; indeed *human* knowledge itself would be unnecessary, human speech being *ab initio* identical with divine speech. As it is, even Revealed Knowledge, though autonomous in principle, is, from the point of descent into time, never absolutely transparent and immediately eloquent.

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The nature and necessity of all *human* knowledge derive, then, from the mystery of the split Logos; the formation of the human-social and historical sciences in our times is, however, distinguished by the fact that they found themselves on the "principle" of the rejection of all given knowledge: nothing that is not achieved by man by the strength of his own powers is to be admitted to the corpus of "scientific" knowledge.

The twin tasks of the human-social and historical sciences follow from the conditions of their formation: (i) to conquer the opacity of the world, life and history by relating thought to the world of practice; and (ii) to establish the truth, certainty and adequacy of the knowledge successively achieved by man.

This gives us the original context of the formation of the sciences of man and his history. The necessity for a separate discipline of Sociology of Knowledge which, methodologically, should be anterior to the formation of the social sciences arises from the logical weakness and practical failure of the modern "principle" of *ab initio* rejection of all given knowledge. Leaving aside the question of the possibility of achieving complete transparency in human knowledge under *any conceivable* conditions, it has to be noted that the modern project of knowledge being an indefinitely long-range one, in the necessarily long intermediate period, the modern scientist would have to

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begin and continue with as yet unexorcised given (inherited) knowledge. He would have to reckon with the fact that there are "always" "already" a world and a history, and a given knowledge thereof. It may then be discovered that all human noesis is conditioned by a pre-given socio-historical and noetic situation; that, in other words, there is no originary (that is, culture and history—free) noesis. A sociology (and a historiography) of knowledge would thus be needed: paradoxically with the ultimate aim of cancelling its own history (and the history of knowledge) and thus recreating an originary noetic autonomous and universal trans-human or metaphysically-based epistemology. This then is a kind of *reductio ad absurdum* following the impossibility of any sociology of knowledge not only at the noetic but at the level of the history of thought-systems as well.

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Part Seven

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As already stated, the need (keeping the problem of its possibility in abeyance) for Sociology of Knowledge arises in the following way: After the withdrawal of faith in the hierocentric universe and the *bios theōrētikos*, the secret but compelling yearning of modern man is to be the new Adam, indeed, to be the Pre-Fall Adam and to inherit the Garden of Eden without the Serpent. With the advent of the modern age, history, in any case, human history, must have an absolute beginning and not a formation on the ruins of all the previous ages. No, it has to be a new creation following the total, absolute annihilation of all the preceding Word, worlds and times.

But this has not come about—or not yet. The decanted, polycentred or perhaps eccentric but centre-making world in which the modern man actually finds himself—partly inherited, partly the product of his own history-making—is therefore from the very beginning weighed down, encircled, oppressed and, above all, haunted by the dead, unburied world; for all his disenchantment, modern man continues to be hauntingly seduced by the original Adam and his *bios theōrētikos*. As the moderns, we are the living who have been unable to bury our dead and unwilling to believe in Resurrection.

The social historical sciences (sciences of man, his society and history) are man-created knowledges of the world under the sign of the new Adam (*homo faber*) and the

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promise of an absolutely new world with freeze-dried history. In their ideality, in their "principle", the social sciences are pure descriptions for use in and glorification of the realm of *vita activa* of *homo faber* and *animal laborans*: alternatively, if possible, they would be modelled on pure syntactics, again for the *use* of *homo faber*, or for his aesthetic purposes, that is, for idling which is the other side of *homo faber*. In its ideal self-image, neither the modern world nor the social sciences leave any space for the possibility of a sociology of knowledge, nor do they need it. In aspiration, modern knowledge is impervious to any second-order situation. In this context, Sociology of Knowledge would not be situated alongside epistemology; it would form the very structure of all epistemology. Very briefly, the problematics of Sociology of Knowledge at this level may be formulated as follows: (i) the problem of infinite regress, relativity, veracity and self-reference arising from the failure of the originary noetic situation model; (ii) the problem of the relationship between the sociological and historiological (and psychological) dimensions that are part of the structure of knowledge; and (iii) the relationship of the irreducible individual level of the known and the equally inerasable social-historical constitution of all individual knowledge; and lastly, (iv) the nature of the knower as a language-bearing being, a speaker, and his position among other language-bearing speakers and

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with a world of man-made objects. Modern thought, however, has not systematically pursued any such problematics. Indeed Sociology of Knowledge cannot be said to have been thematically aware of its ultimate aim of recreating an originary noetic situation. (Just as modern philosophies of history have seldom been adequately self-critical to be thematically aware of their ultimate task: the abolition of all history prior to the Advent of the modern "age".) Durkheim's sociology of knowledge may be seen as situated at the noetic level; but not systematically and rigorously. (Sorokin's *Sociocultural Causality, Space, Time* could also be mentioned in this connection: it is also weak.) The notion of what has been called here the originary noetic level is incompatible with the idea of sociological epistemology which historicizes the idea of human knowing and knowledge; at the same time without an autonomous noetic level (the originary noetic level) the social-cultural cannot be used as a fundamental ground of determining and a constitutive factor in knowing and knowledge; for the postulate of society as a constitutive dimension of epistemology pre-supposes a *theory* (and not merely social practice) of society, but the possibility of such a theory contradicts the postulate itself. It is clear that whatever the need, there is no (logical or dialectical) possibility of a socio-epistemological theory of human knowledge. Sociology of Knowledge must situate itself—if at all—at the level of

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history of thought systems. This is not to suggest that this conception of Sociology of Knowledge will not have serious epistemological consequences. Indeed, it too will undermine the autonomy or original status of epistemology as also the possibility of any knowledge. It precludes any determination; as man's own construction it is wholly autonomous. It is true because, in principle, reality in modern age is wholly dependent on the viewpoint of man—but certainly not in the sense of Pirandello: So it is if you think so.

Insofar as this ideal self-image of man, this "world-picture" is not yet actualized—or indeed, in truth, is non-actualizable—all social science carries within it a sociology of knowledge as also a project of pure autonomous discourse (pure syntactics). This can be seen easily in the work of social scientists from Montesquieu, Adam Ferguson, St. Simon, Comte, Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Mannheim, and Talcott Parsons. A separate discipline, Sociology of Knowledge, is now required: it is the haunting, deathless shadow of history before the modern age, it is the unburied civilizations and the simple tradition-bound people surviving as "primitive societies" that create the space for Sociology of Knowledge; but this possibility is wholly dependent upon the possibility of modern social science itself. Granted the possibility of the latter, Sociology of Knowledge is needed to give social science a logico-

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historical foundation; or, more truly, to exorcise the sinister shades of other histories and other worlds which constantly hover over modern knowledge and modern civilization threatening their truth and life.

The post-Renaissance Western man or, in Foucault's narrower description, the post-French Revolution Western man (only European-American man can be modern in the qualitative meaning of this term) has surely been aware of the strange and extremely unstable foundations of the social sciences and of Sociology of Knowledge which has the task of creating the space in which the founding act of the social sciences could take place. It is, indeed, an odd and perplexing situation: Sociology of Knowledge is to create the conditions that would make possible the self-founded emergence and development of (modern) social sciences; at the same time the conditions for the possibility of Sociology of Knowledge itself are dependent on the well-founded existence of modern social sciences. Modern man has known that the secret make-believe of the absolutely new world of modernity ceaselessly contradicted and sustained by his quest for continuity (generally and essentially in the mode of evolutionism) cannot but be the most slender and precarious support for his knowledge and civilization doomed to disintegration. He has therefore transferred the make-believe of a radically new world from the present to the future: it is the progress from post-Christendom

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imperialism (White Man's Burden) to Brave New World or to Universal and Holy Freedom. In other words, the "reality" of the new world is historicized and "scientifically" (atemporally) projected as the coming consummatory phase of humanity. As Foucault has so insightfully remarked , all positivist and humanist thought has to be eschatological.[60] This eschatological dimension is open and central in Marx who promises a new man and a new society *and* a new time—all previous history being no history in the strict sense, for in view of the radicality of the new, it cannot be seen as a preparation for the Advent of history proper. In non-Marxian social-scientific and philosophical thought the futuristic-eschatological move is no less open, but unsure and faltering, unwilling to face its own logic even to the miserable extent that Marxism does (or did). In St. Simon, Comte, Durkheim, Mannheim, Toynbee, the promise takes the form of a new religion that will renew and sustain modern man's New Society: in St. Simon, New Christianity; in Comte, the same but called Religion of Humanity; in Toynbee, again, Renewal of Christianity; in Durkheim and Mannheim it is Sociology itself. Modern civilization is founded in a decisional uprooting and an erratic longing for discarded roots in the form of renewals, transpositions and temporalizations of eternal verities. The very forces of this civilization undermine the eschatological energy of non-Marxian thought: thus making the tension between

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positivism and eschatology uncreative. Our civilization is perhaps unique in being rooted in the future—a strange idea but unavoidable in a horizontalizing thought system which is incompatible with trans-causal thinking in which the concepts of "root" and "centre" belong. Marxian thought preserves its integrity at this point: modern Western civilization is rejected, though ambivalently, as "pre-history"; religion is completely eliminated; and a unified science of nature and history is to be established by the New Man and New Society representing a complete and radical break with the past and accepting the uprooting that necessarily precedes a new beginning and a new world. This perhaps accounts for the energy of the Marxian idea. (This is by no means to suggest that the quest for continuity does not deflect and warp Marxian thought: it does. The conflation of evolution and revolution and the dependence on Hegelian dialectics, to name only two, are powerful residues of continuity, signifying betrayal of the vocation of Marxian thought.)

The *eschaton* that is the *telos* of social science and a talisman to protect man against the dark shadows of other times, other thoughts, other civilizations that constantly menace the modern civilization and thought, this *eschaton* takes three major forms during the intervening time: Imperial universalism; socialist revolutionism/modernization; and, nuclearism. In truth, all these are simply different aspects of universalistic imperialism. What all this means is something

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quite simple: the frustration of not already being the new man living in a wholly new time and society when transformed into a promised future and then projected upon a historical, actual present, necessarily takes various forms of totalitarian violence: the suicidal, cataclysmic potency of the nuclearization of politics and international relations is not an aberration but a working out of the satanic combination of positivism (sciences) and eschatology, and since the social sciences are doomed to fail in exorcising pre-modern history and thought bound as they are to either anachronistic or unthematized regressive modes of thought, only a politico-cultural conquest of the disturbing forces will do the job and mask the failure of modern social scientific and philosophical disciplines. (A failure that is desirable for continuing the unfinished agendum of the post-Christendom European imperialism. Hence the highly self-critical mood and sophisticated creativity of contemporary thought.) Nuclearization of political and socio-economic life with the prospect of global holocaust hanging over our heads is the limit of unintelligibility. That may be the only way in which modern man's darkest secret, his yearning for being Creator *ex nihilo* could be manifested in the mode of an immanent historical possibility.

The discarded but uncleared heritage from the past appears to modern man under the general form of unreason even though it has never been difficult to see that the pre-

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modern or, in general, the other-than-modern cannot be analyzed and understood or explained simply in terms of departures, deviations and distortions of Reason; nor can it be set in place as pre-rational and pre-logical. But this approach cannot be avoided. Modern Reason fills the whole of intelligible (and scientific) space and hence all that falls outside the famed framework of modernism must go under the shadow of a residual category—unreason. In a situation like this, the social sciences, in general, and Sociology of Knowledge in particular, have only the following strategies available to them: (i) to show that all that is not modern is false or irrational (or both); (ii) to show that it is obsolete and irrelevant because wholly determined by social conditions of times forever gone by; and (iii) to show that non-modern thought systems and cultures are true and rational but each in its own terms. The first involves a universal criterion of truth and rationality. If this criterion (transmodern and perennial!) is authentically (that is, consistently, no *ad hoc*) used, it would undermine modernity, which represents a radical rupture; in any case, it would, in the last analysis, represent an illicit universalization of modern logic and rationality, and its operation would be necessarily anachronistic and essentially distorting. The second already presupposes a general and universal theory of society and a general theory of the relationship between the theoretical and extra-theoretical existential or socio-historical realms. In

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Foucault's terminology, it unwarrantedly pre-supposes several themes: the heteronomy of discourse and discursive practices; the autonomy of non-discursive practices (or in any case, the invalidity of the thesis that discourse is a major factor in the formation of any non-discursive practice); that the relation between the discursive and non-discursive practices (whether of determinate or non-determinate relativity) is a necessary one (for a contingent relation would involve a regressive series of determinations or relativizing relations *ad infinitum*). Sociology of Knowledge thus pre-supposes its own fundamental theories; in other words, it is a pseudo-metaphysical discipline. (As for the third, the brief discussion could be found on pp. 57-59, *supra*, in this Essay.)

Our analyses in this Essay and the foregoing review of Foucault's archaeology of the human sciences reveal an incredibly odd situation: sociology (and the modern social sciences) cannot be a well-founded science unless a rigorous sociology of knowledge is included in or operates alongside it; strictly speaking, it has to be anterior to it; at the same time sociology itself is already pre-supposed by Sociology of Knowledge. It may be possible to reject this argument as excessive or too formalistic and to save the situation by an appeal to the dialectics of mutual dependence. The situation, however, is worse for it involves an infinite regress: Sociology of Knowledge, unlike say, Sociology of Art, etc.,

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gives rise to a sociology of knowledge of the sociology of knowledge (as a system of knowledge). And quite apart from the argument from the invalidity of Sociology of Knowledge, the decisive difficulty, as has been shown above, is that it is impossible to found a soical science as the *objective* knowledge of a knowable who is at the same time the knower himself.

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Part Eight

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Objectification of man and human knowledge is the central idea of Foucault's archaeology of the human sciences; some aspects of which have been reviewed above with reference to the problem of Sociology of Knowledge in particular, and the foundation of sociology in general. Foucault has centred his archaeology of the human sciences in the problematics of the foundation of psychology refuting as duplicity the Durkheimian insistence on the distinction between the social and the psychological and the declaration of the autonomy of the former. (Durkheim himself is subsequently forced to found sociology on primitive religious experience which he then circularly explains in terms of social facts and symbolism without establishing an adequate theory of symbolism.) This approach to the problematics of the founding of the social sciences is, in one form or another, the only "sound" one; since, with the rejection of a hieratic social order and a hierophanic cosmology, all order has necessarily to be founded on man's relation to himself. "The psychological dimensions of madness cannot, therefore, be eliminated," observes Foucault, "on the basis of a principle of explanation or reduction external to them. They must be situated within the general relation that Western man established between himself and himself close on two hundred years ago. Seen from its most acute angle, this relation is the psychology in which he has put a little of his astonishment, much of his

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pride, and most of his ability to forget; seen from a wider angle, it is the emergence, in the forms of knowledge, of a *Homo psychologicus*, possessor of internal truth, fleshless, ironical, and positive of all self-consciousness and all possible knowledge; lastly, when seen from the widest angle, this relation is that which man has substituted for his relation to truth, by alienating it in the fundamental postulate that he is himself the truth of the truth.

"This relation, which is the philosophical foundation of all possible psychology, could be defined only from the particular moment in the history of our civilization: the moment at which the great confrontation between Reason and Unreason ceased to be waged in the dimension of freedom, and in which reason ceased to be for man an ethic and became a nature."[61]

Elaborated in different modes and levels in his later works, this early insight of Foucault is central to his archaeological analysis of Western knowledge. Not only does it illumine some of the main themes of the present long and complex examination of the logical possibility of Sociology of Knowledge; it is also a specially valuable aid in rethinking traditional ideas in their bearing on our problematics. Let me therefore venture to offer some reflections centred around this great insight in the hope of clarifying some of its more important and urgent

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implications. (They are not a reading of Foucault's text(s): They maieutially come forth from my reading of his work.)

At a decisive point in the history of the present the great confrontation between Reason and Unreason ceased to be waged in the dimension of freedom. Let us note that the confrontation is perennial: for Unreason is one of the names of the other side of world-manifestation, the darker side of dawn; we will therefore always be faced with both reason and unreason, thought and unthought, right and wrong, true and false, and so on. The crucial point is whether or not we are fully and responsibly prepared to confront both, that is, to recognize ourselves in both, own the two faces as the twin aspects of our own Face of Light-and-Dark, reason-and-unreason. This is the space of freedom in which the forces of reason and unreason, right and wrong, good and evil dwell; and man recognizes their independent but inseparable reality to each other. If any of the two aspects is denied reality, man ceases to face them in freedom, for then he is bound to battle the other to defeat it. In other words, the confrontation of reason and unreason, if free, is increasing: no final victory or defeat is achieved or expected. (All of us are Janus Bifrons.) Moreover, if the opposition of reason and unreason is situated in the freedom of man, he remains, in possibility, above them; though, of course, both the forces are internal to him; indeed in this situation he can recognize the true nature of this opposition as a necessary split of the

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Logos and hence also their unity behind the scene. (Opinions can differ on the nature of bondage, not on the meaning of freedom.)

Freedom is the transcendence of this bondage; the positive moral meaning follows immediately: to be free is to be ruled by what one is—and not by what one is not. When reason ceased for man to be an ethic and became a nature in the modern age, man became unfree, for nature is what appears and disappears independently of man. (Whether nature is aware of its own appearance and disappearance is a different problem; man certainly is, to begin with, aware of the asymmetry in his relation to nature, namely, that it is that which is independent of him but on which he is dependent.) An ethic is the application of doctrinally given norms to contingent problems of individual and social life: it is right action, and right action is a matter of conscience or awareness, ideally, of the whole and not of the will, individual or "social". Ethic (whatever its explication in Foucaldian thought) is not a matter of free will but of knowledge and *good will* and requires hierarchical orders of knowledge and levels of knowing and learning: the positive and the philosophic, the lower and the higher; the former comprising knowledge of the self, the internal and external world and the latter, philosophic knowledge about knowledge. The latter, second order knowledge is a progressively higher order knowledge since by virtue of

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being reflective it continuously tries to comprehend the known and the knower and their relationship. This movement of self-reflective knowing is infinitely regressive and sourceward and hence counter-stream and centripetal. It is by virtue of this higher (and higher) order knowledge that thinking and action are related and then transcended. The self-reflective intellect is of course a gift, a nature, and accordingly cannot itself be stopped, negated or overcome: de-mentation (and truth) which is incontrovertibly the *telos* of higher order knowledge can be realized by Grace alone, Grace being implicit in the notion of intelligibility itself.

When reason is an ethic for man, it is constantly subordinated to its right use: its *telos* remains truth not subjugation of all that is the other: confrontation is not reduced to the fact or premise of conquest but a step to conversion. The source of the ethic being higher knowledge, man remains free in relation to reason and can see its limits not only in unreason, but in its relationship to truth.

When reason becomes man's nature, *ex hypothesi*, he becomes its slave: he cannot but be rational. The other side of reason, then, becomes a threat to his whole existence and hence he feels bound to battle against it and conquer it: an illusion of free will then takes the place of good will, the gift of grace.

When reason is conceived in the mode of nature under a theoretical framework which does not permit the

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distinction between *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*, nature is violently fragmented for the self-reflective luminosity of Reason limits and compromises the opacity and independence (in relation to the human world) characterisitc of nature. Unreason—madness—now appears as a kind of "natural" nature in contrast to rational nature. In Foucaldian terminology, it becomes a nature of nature. Unreason can therefore be now only rejected and excluded, never assimilated and transcended. The con-frontation of Reason and Unreason cannot now dialectically lead to the unity of human intellect in which Reason and Unreason have their common source. The split between Reason and Unreason, though ineluctable, takes now an antagonistic and permanent form, exterminating all possibility of man's ascent to a trans-reason intellectual unity.

The self-deluding extermination of Unreason and the historical absolutism of Reason are rooted in a much deeper process: the objectification of man: a process without which there would be no possibility of objective knowledge of man, his society and history. This is, of course, a tautology and it shows that for (modern) human-social sciences knowledge of the whole (and the wholesome) man would for ever remain impossible.

It has already been observed that with the loss of a hierocentric world and transtemporally oriented history, a homocentric world and an immanentist teleology of history

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became inescapable. Man's primary and fundamental relationship now became an externalized self-relationship; not a relationship to his essential or real self, nor to the other, for both stood abolished with the elimination of the hierocentric universe. When Mead makes the Generalized Other and Weber the Other the basis of the social, it is clear that this other is simply the same, an externalized self; the notion of the generalization of the other (a process carried out by the self) as such implies an externalized viewpoint which ironically leads to human omniscience; in any event, the full problematics of the self and the other are hardly formulated by Weber and only too lazily resolved by Mead in terms of an evolutionary theory of mind and language. A profoundly disturbing move takes place when the category "social" replaces the notion of the public realm and "man", the human self, is shown as essentially social—a move common to both Comte and Marx; subsequently Durkheim and Weber developed on the basis of Mead, a sophisticated theory of mind, self and society. The self in both Durkheim and Weber is, defined strangely, in terms of the other with the odd but logical consequences that both self and society are abolished in favour of the salesman and the demagoue and their victims, the consumer and the voter.

This wretched culmination had been implicit in the move from political man who is a knower and an actor and a sufferer to the social man who is a role performer and an

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observer and a consumer: it is the move from a cosmologically constituted public realm to the humanly constructed society which is, and can be, nothing more than an aggregate. This move brings with it the rejection of saving knowledge and the imperative to objective and conquering knowledge. It originates from the Great Frustration modern man experiences and suffers in realizing that after the death of God and the loss of the hierocentric world, human history ought to have begun with a Second Innocence of Man and in a New Time, but this did not come about. The centre and certainty that man thus lost or discarded, he himself must now create—an impossible task for one who begins with a deep-rooted aversion to the Unknown and the Unknowable as a mark of his originality and renunciation of his heritage.

This is the crucial moment at which the autological mode (and paradigm) of human knowledge both in its metaphysical and theological forms is overthrown and the anthropological mode of thought (and paradigm for action) is established. Given the pre-requisites and pre-suppositions of modern thought, no other mode of knowing and knowledge (and paradigm for making and acting) is possible. With its central question, who (or what) am I?, autology will take me regressively to my unknowable, transcendent source and identity; since, however, a tabu already operates against the unknowable, the only way for

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modern knowledge is to proscribe the (autological) question. All that man can seek is knowledge of knowable man. The self (the I) and the other (you) are now replaced by man and society (the generalized other). A psychology and a sociology are thus needed as the two primary and basic requirements of the anthropological mode of knowledge in which the essence of the "I" is posited in its status as man; in other words, as an object among other objects or as a being among other beings; and since man himself is now the ultimate, central reality, all knowledge—of nature, history, life—is cast in the image of man and becomes essentially anthropomorphic—a kind of technology and ethnography.

The "object" is not an ontological category; strictly speaking, not a phenomenological one either. Apart from being always a relational concept—which is not the main point here—an object presupposes a process or procedure of objectification by virtue of which an existent or an occurrent becomes an object, that is, a "thing" that is thrown, placed, made visible, tangible (sensible) or intelligible in relation to an experiencer or knower. An object *qua* object, that is, in consequence of the process of objectification, has no *telos* of its own (and hence is neither independent nor complete) and exists in a necessarily asymmetrical relationship to some experiencer, knower or user. A being or an entity *qua* object is always abject. This, let it be repeated, is not true of phenomena which could conceivably exist independently of

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a perceiver, even if appearance is necessary to them. Only an objectifying process or procedure turns them into objects. This is why it is important to remember that there can be no objective knowledge of the world or the universe before the appearance of man—a point emphasized by Barfield (*Saving the Appearances,* 1957, *passim*) and also by Foucault (*The Order of Things*, 1970) who, as far as I can see, does not envisage a pre-human archaeology (even if he believed in some form of evolutionism, which is doubtful).

We are both the knower and the known (the to-be-known): internally, because we are endowed with a self-reflexive consciousness and self-reflective intelligence; externally, because we live with others of our kind. So on the one hand, in each act of awareness and knowing, we ourselves become objects to ourselves; and on the other, plurality being our historical condition each of us is an object to the other: none can avoid the gaze of the other. None of us can escape the condition of being looked at, or becoming the object of the other's gaze (no matter how loving or hostile); the only redemption is the absolute look, the transcendental glance from the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. It is a truism of traditional thinking (and, I would like to believe, of all authentic thinking) that our objectification is fundamentally the split between the knower and the known, without which, however, no human knowledge is possible. Indeed our constitutive characteristic—self-reflexive

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consciousness and self-reflective intelligence—is at the same time the source of our inescapable objectification and alienation, constant confrontation with what we are not: *na me so attā*. The natural course, that is, logical and dialogical, is to move towards trans-objectification, a state of primordial unity of knower—knowable (known)—knowledge. This natural upstream movement of man, his polity and history which has been from time immemorial mediated by religion's supremacy ever human life is jettisoned by modern thought and knowledge which are built on the fear of the unknowable. Thus it comes about that while for traditional thinking it is the objectifying movement inherent in his mode of knowing that is the problem, for modern thought it is the knower, the speaker, the non-objective (or supra-objective) aspect of man which is the trouble of all troubles.

It should be clear that the objectification entailed by the anthropological mode of modern thought has its problematics at two levels: that of man and that of the world (and nature). It is useful to mention this distinction of levels even though they are not separable. The *telos* of modern knowledge, the effective vocation of Western *ratio* has been to objectify man, his society, history; also nature and the world (=the (modern) system of the relationship between man—nature and man—man and man—divine).

This task has been specially assumed by the social sciences; physical, biological and some of the modern

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logico-mathematical sciences (e.g., cybernetics) have the same task; however, it has not been thematized there because the object status of nature is taken for granted by the physical sciences, and the logico-mathematical sciences are supposed to be wholly above the subject-object problem. The objectifying procedures of the natural and mathematical sciences will not be discussed here, though it is of the greatest importance. It is hoped that an Indian philosopher or social science student competent in this field will take it up.

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Part Nine

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The task, the ultimate goal, built into the origin and constitution of the social sciences is to establish the supremacy and gain control of the objectifying process inherent in man's self-reflective intelligence: in other words, the social-scientific task is to establish the pre-eminence of man—the knowable and the known—and accordingly to undermine man, the knower and speaker; man, the unknown unknowable. The first and foremost obstacle in the way of modern objectification programme is the human mind: speech, language, reason: in other words, the task of inventing psychology (including psychoanalysis and psycho-therapy) and cybernetics. But speaking and rational man can protest, falsify, challenge, disbelieve, make alternative proposals besides responding in unique ways. How then to construct a psychology of self-knowing, rational, intelligent and, above all, speaking man? Impossible. It cannot even begin. It is one of the great insights of Foucault to have seen that all psychological sciences are founded on psychopathology. The mad man, the mentally ill can be taken as an object: achieving this through various ways including exclusion of madness and unreason from the social world and the universe of serious discourse. In any case, they, like the child and the "savage" cannot talk back: they can, of course, but the soi-disant "sane" have always assumed and reserved the privilege of giving any or no meaning to the speech, the reason or

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unreason of those who are labelled the savage or the mad, disturbed mentally or ill. The child, the "savage" and the mad man are denied their human privilege to be heard and so denied the gift of speech. Psychology treats man as speechless: what matters for it is not our understanding of ourselves but only that knowledge of ourselves which is given us and certified by the experts, the psychologists (and the cyberneticians). In a word, psychology, the study of human mind, is the grand procedure for objectifying man; and it accomplishes its mission the only way it is possible, by treating him as if he were speechless and subrational: normally being seen under the sign of the pathological. The patient's speech is essentially a monologue and so is the psycho-analyst's or the physician's. And monologue is a form of silence or, in a different context, a technique to silence the speaker by placing him, with his consent of course, in a situation in which he alone talks.

As already noted, the second condition of necessity for fundamental and natural objectification is the plurality of human existence; each one of us is a "looked-at" being. Traditionally, this is our basic bondage: we must suffer being looked at. True, we can return the glance and through this responsibility we can seek our redemption: we can look at but at the same time and hereby look beyond the other. This again is an upstream course, the way to the Avalokiteśvara. Man's freedom is restored thereby. Here

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the master strategy for objectification takes the twin forms of sociology and ethnology (social anthropology, comparative sociology). I am defined as a social animal (a strange definition anyway in which the differentia contradicts the genus) and sociality is defined in terms of each one's orientation to the "other". Sociology abolishes the problematics of the other by dissolving it in reciprocity and mutuality presided over by imperial-scientific asymmetry between the white man and the others. With the elimination of the problematics of the other, the looked-at who suffers because he has to aspire for the glance that would respond to all the others is rendered speechless, for if he exists through the other he cannot really speak to him.

Sociology conquers the intra-totality other. Ethnology has the same task to accomplish for the other ("intercultural") totalities contemporaneous with our time. It does it by "scientific" silencing of other "cultures". For if a "culture" other than that of the white man is allowed to *speak* to the scientist in its own voice, no objectification will be possible (and hence no science).

To render man—ourselves—speechless requires, above all else, even before the conquest of mind, self and the other (society), the conquest or self-conquest of language. An objectification project for language, like that for man, would always run into insuperable difficulties because of its semantic infinity, self-generative and self-negating powers,

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infinitely regressive self-reference, invincible residues of opacity and the mystery of its signifying and symbolizing relationship to reality. All this is generally recognized—in form or another, at one level or another. Yet a persistent and central project of modern thought, and not of modern thought alone, is that of demystification and conquest of language and speech. Ideas of a universal language, a universal algebra, an ideal language, a universal sign-system, a performative theory of language: such are some of the variations on the theme of the self-conquest of language. The essence of most of these projects is to be found in the possibility and hope of constructing the theory of language as pure syntactics, that is, one that is independent of semantics. We have here something like an *inversion* of the traditional aspiration of man to participate in the second highest level of language (*Paśyanti*) which is atemporal and syntaxless. The impossible project of linguistics as pure syntactics has, in various guises, a common consequence: in his relation to the sign-system, the knower-speaker is reduced to a decoding apparatus; and the knower-speaker can be regularly seen—as "advanced" thought does, in fact, him—as a kind of information-processing system.

The structuralist and formalist programmes which have often dominated linguistics, art and literature, as well as logic may seem to be on the way to overcoming the (homocentric) anthropological nature of modern thought.

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This is an illusion. Despite their abstract level, their nomological universalism, their rule-determined invariance, and their scientific objectivity and mathematical certainty based on these, contemporary structuralisms, formalisms and many other schools of linguistics are grand systems of intransitive objectification, mechanization and reification of reality, experience and truth. Claims to the contrary notwithstanding, the problematics of the whole and the part have remained unresolved in the various structuralisms and formalisms: that is one of the reasons why none of them has been able to get in any central manner beyond the order of positivities. In consequence, as Foucault points out, structuralisms fail to avoid conflating the positive and the fundamental. In other words, structuralism (and formalism) has not succeeded in avoiding falling between atemporalism and historicism—evolutionism. Thus, as Foucault aptly puts it, now the fundamental doubles as the empirical, now the positive doubles as the fundamental. Consequently, in an algebraic system of positive knowledge, man as knower and speaker, as bearer of language, does not and cannot appear. He can exist there only in the space of exploitation and manipulation. The universal structures, given the humanist, the Marxist or, in general, the rationalist universe of discourse and action, must be human constructions—in the full sense of Vico. The culmination is the ultimate in hubris:

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deleted man and rejected history enter the system of human knowledge and praxis as Demiurge and New Time.

Modern thought sees language as a medium of communication (period). Man is supposed to speak and act through, by means of, language, which is accordingly reduced to an instrumental order. Objective knowledge and the science of communication needed by it—indeed modern science itself—require that the medium be completely neutral and transparent. It is under the postulate of medium-transparency that human communication can be—and has been—cybernated by algebraizing language and speech.

A programme of this order can succeed only through huge and planned violence: for language can never be *made* wholly transparent: the impossibility is inherent in any passage from the Non-manifest to the Manifest. In order to make a medium (in this case, language) "scientific", that is, completely neutral-objective, each element of the linguistic system—identified or unidentified, sensible or abstract—must be supposed to be meaning-bearing at one level or another. The fulfilment of this condition would imply unending layers of meaning; making the text invisible; it would further imply a near-complete overlap of syntactics and semantics apart from creating extremely difficult problems in the theory and practice of translation from one language to another. (Translation is an extremely difficult concept, anyway.) These implications of the idea of

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language as a transparent or purely neutral "scientific" medium clearly show that the idea may not only be impossible of realization; far worse, it may not really be an intelligible one: in any case, in the extent to which it may at all be possible, its realization would destroy the very concept of a linguistic medium. If therefore the quest for objective, absolutely neutral, "scientific" medium is given up, the opacities of the medium will remain, and however negligible they may be rendered, the scientific system will, in principle, remain incomplete and under constant threat from an incalculable source internal to the system.

It thus appears that within the system of modern scientific (and secular-humanist) thought there is no solution to the problem of scientific-objective (transparent) medium. McLuhan's "the medium is the message", if followed to its logical end, would involve absolute transparency of the linguistic medium; it therefore stops very much short of it, and, in its arrested form, would end up in a blind alley.

The dominant approach today is that of cybernetics (on which computer sciences are based). It is based on the reduction of language to its bare referential dimension (information). It overcomes the opacity of the linguistic medium by constructing its own computer "language" that is strictly univocal and is governed by a mathematical syntax. Peirce's icon, index and symbol are all eliminated, all mechanical "language" being a system of cues, signals,

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physico-mechanical sensors and symptomatic indices. Encoding and decoding replace speaking, reading, writing. Signs and the divination of their meaning in speech and writing having been principally eliminated, cybernetic "language" is built on the very opacity of the linguistic medium. (For absolute univocality and binarization of the linguistic system destroy the creative infinitude of language and man. No intimations of the Holy, now.)

The truth of the gift of language is, however, profoundly obscured by the postulate that language is primarily and essentially man's means of communication. A patently false postulate: for, as Heidegger puts it, not man but language speaks through man. Heidegger is repeating here, in his own way and at his own level, a traditional insight; and following him Foucault has also shown how language always precedes man and forever exceeds his expressive, even creative, powers. Many philosophers and social theorists talk today in a Heideggerian idiom; his theory of language has, however, not moved to the centre of modern thought and practice. Perhaps it cannot; its honest understanding and serious acceptance/application will alter the whole nature of our social and political life: radical insights are certainly found in our time but their truth calls the intellectuals to repentance (metanoia) without which it remains marginal and powerless. Bewitched by and trapped in the order of positivity (science and technology) and

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history ("man makes himself"), we lose the gift of metanoia to futurological optimism and leave the present to conservatory, emancipatory or revolutionary violence.

If we would not recognize and accept the mystery of the hieratic origin of language and its kinship with hierophany, we remain trapped in a demiurgic genocidal anthropology.

The secret aspiration of all sociology of knowledge is to be the foundation not only of psychology, sociology and ethnology but of the philosophy of language as well (Durkheim, Mead). It seeks to develop, as overarching system that would permit it to provide a higher order socio-analysis of psychology and psychoanalysis, a general theory of divergent thought systems and a cultural-biological (or bio-cultural) evolutionary theory of language. It could very well follow the structuralist and formalist schools in its analysis and invented sociology of *Weltanschauungen*. Indeed Barthes' semiology (and semiotics) is very much sociological and could be seen as a combination of sociologies of culture and knowledge. A professional sociologist's version of Barthesian semiotics is certainly possible and may already be there.

Abandoning the quest for its true vocation, which was never properly begun, Sociology of Knowledge has never been a radical critic of the social sciences (a role that is at the same time self-critical and could therefore lead it

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beyond modernism): it has always been their accomplice pretending to be more sophisticated than the social sciences. And in this way it has fully participated—perhaps pre-eminently—in the project of destroying our essential character as a knowing and speaking being who is self-knowing, who is wholly enmeshed *and* self-transcending. This betrayal can only be the hubristic aspiration of the part to achieve an absolute comprehension of the whole, an aspiration which can only mean the desire of the part to conquer the whole: eventually to usurp the status and power of the whole by a kind of literalization and reification of metonymic thinking—a most disastrous case of modern thought's central tendency to reduce figures of thought to figures of speech. In attempting to master, by exclusion or reductive appropriation, unreason, madness—indeed the very infinitude presupposed in all historical or evolutionary determination—historical Reason forgets the obvious: that without God, finite thought could never assume the right to exclude madness. This truth, as Derrida has pointed out, was only too well known to Descartes who was clear that "finally, it is God alone who, by permitting me to extirpate myself from a Cogito that at its proper moment can always remain a silent madness, also insures my representations and my cognitive determinations, that is, my discourse against madness."[62] In Descartes (1596-1650) there is still alive the consciousness of a vertical, theocentric infinitude of Reason

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which is the condition of our existence and the foundation of all its historical determinations, rational and irrational, sane and insane, good and evil. It is only subsequently that this sense of the trans-historical, trans-mundane origin and destiny of Reason is corroded and its infinitude is horizontalized and projected upon history: modern Western *Ratio* comes then to identify itself with Infinite Reason itself and assumes its *telos*: "I am referring, of course, to the spiritual shape of Europe. Now it is no longer a conglomeration of different nations influencing one another only through commerce and power struggles. Rather, a new spirit, stemming from philosophy and its particular sciences, a spirit of free critique and norm-giving aimed at infinite tasks, dominates humanity through and through, creating new, infinite ideals. . . . Within this ideally directed total society philosophy retains its guiding function and its particular infinite task: the function of free and universal theoretical reflection, which encompasses all ideals and the total ideal, i.e., the universe of all norms. *Within European civilization, philosophy has constantly to exercise its function as one which is archontic for the civilization as a whole.*"[63]

"We feel this precisely in our own Europe. There is something unique here that is recognized in us by all other human groups, too, something that, quite apart from all considerations of utility, becomes a motive for them to

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Europeanize themselves even in their unbroken will to spiritual self-preservation; whereas we, if we understand ourselves properly, would never Indianize ourselves, for example. I mean that we feel (and in spite of all obscurity this feeling is probably legitimate) that an entelechy is inborn in our European civilization which holds sway throughout all the changing shapes of Europe and accords to them the sense of a development toward an ideal shape of life and being as an eternal pole. Not that this is a case of one of those well-known types of purposeful striving which give the organic beings their character in the physical realm; thus it is not something like a biological development from a seminal form through stages to maturity with succeeding ages and dying-out. There is, for essential reasons, no zoology of peoples. They are spiritual unities; they do not have, and in particular the supranational unity of Europe does not have, a mature shape that has ever been reached or could be reached as a shape that is regularly repeated. Psychic humanity has never been complete and never will be, and can never repeat itself. The spiritual *telos* of European humanity, in which the particular *telos* of particular nations and of individual men is contained, lies in the infinite, is an infinite idea toward which, in concealment, the whole spiritual becoming aims, so to speak. As soon as it becomes consciously recognized in the development as telos, it necessarily also becomes practical as a goal of the will; and thereby a new, higher

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stage of development is introduced which is under the guidance of norms, normative ideas."[64]

According to Husserl, it was Renaissance that determined the whole meaning of the modern period, and as a result of this, European humanity has sought "to create the universal science as the instrument for giving itself a new rootedness and for transforming itself into a humanity based on pure reason."[65] This project, it is commonly accepted, ran aground before long. Acutely aware of this failure and deeply anxious to restore to the European civilization its lost élan, Husserl is convinced that the first and perhaps the most crucial and urgent step is "to make understandable the obvious failure of the great intention to realize gradually the idea of a *philosophia perennis*, a true and genuine universal science ultimately grounded."[66]

The revived *philosophia perennis* is, it is clear, a *misnomer* for the philosophia perennis sought by modern European humanity is so radically different and "new" that if one is authentic, the other is not. Husserl held Descartes' awareness of God and the divinity of infinite Reason to be a self-misunderstanding. The task therefore to which he is calling the philosopher to rededicate himself is that of establishing universal knowledge, that is omniscience achieved by man through his own unaided, unmediated powers. For him "the universally, apodictically grounded and grounding science arises" in the late modern period "as

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the necessarily highest function of mankind, as I said, namely, as making possible mankind's development into a personal autonomy and into an all-encompassing autonomy for mankind—the idea which represents the driving force of life for the highest stage of mankind."[67] Indeed Husserl sees "the philosophizing ego" as "the bearer of absolute reason coming to itself."[68] There is no trace here of what Kierkegaard saw as "the supreme passion of the Reason to seek a collision" with the unknown, willing "its own downfall", of "the supreme paradox of all thought" attempting to "discover something that thought cannot think". Husserl is the bearer of demiurgic anthropology. For him human Reason is self-absolutizing; unworried by patent, irreducible incommensurabilities. There can scarcely be any doubt that it is *not* the restoration of the divine *telos* of human reason, the renewal of the City Divine dedicated to the greater glory of God that Husserl is seeking. No. He is seeking to renew the "*concept of Europe as the historical teleology of the infinite goals of reason.*"[69] He is hopping for the rebirth, the phoenix-like rise of Europe from "the destructive blaze of lack of faith," from "the smoldering fire of despair over the West's mission for humanity," through "a heroism of reason that overcomes naturalism once and for all."[70] At the close of his intellectual career Husserl longs impatiently for the grounding of reason and universal knowledge in the history of European thought from post-

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Socratic Greek philosophy to his own transcendental phenomenology. It is indeed not Reason but a defiant ethnocentric imperial rationality (or "sociological thought"): one that is apodictically grounded. (If at all.)

Did Husserl realize what he saw as the true Cartesian vocation, what his last work on the crisis of European sciences does realize is the vocation of Comtean sociology: a sociology that was at the same time more powerfully a sociology of knowledge?

The conjunction of the teleology of universal knowledge (omniscience) through self-mediated (infinite) Reason and a Europe-centred historicist ontology is by no means a chance; self-achieved omniscience and phenomenological apodicticism can be no better grounded than in frozen, spatialized history: no epochē, no transcendental subjectivity can take the ego-centricity of phenomenology beyond ethnocentricity. "To think for oneself is to think of oneself"; phenomenological thinking cannot but be inauthentic, that is, as long as its *telos*, its Truth remains historicized, and indeed, worse, ethnicized.

The secularization of Christian Europe sets for the philosopher the crucial task of establishing a new supra-theological (or more correctly, non-theological) ground for universal and absolutely certain truth (ideas, values) within the time and space of history. In *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, Husserl

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addresses himself anew to this task and attempts to solve it by showing that a transcendental phenomenology of history could yield the absolute *telos* of history. It was an impossible task, but Husserl could not reject it without repudiating at the same time the entire heritage of modern European civilization. In the thought of Husserl the (non-Marxian) soteriology of modern thought reaches its limit as also its final limitation. This would be true precisely of Sociology of Knowledge (and contemporary schools of phenomenological social science) had it ever seriously faced the task of grounding social science logically instead of depending on the hypothesis of illicit and non-falsifiable evolutionary teleology. Both the Marxian and Comtean systems of thought have been aware of the problem of self-grounding of modern knowledge: they have however remained, each in its own way, almost wholly pre-occupied with abolishing traditional thought (and pre-modern history), elaborating systems (and techniques) of manipulation and exploitation, and masking the nihilism of relativisms inherent in the modern mode of thought.

This strange project of debunking and demystification, masking and mystifying, is constitutive of the nature of modernism: the absolutization of the relative, the make-believe abolition of traditional thinking and its "life-worlds", the ethnocentric (pseudo) universalization of European (and American) history, the infinitization and apotheosis of (transcendental) phenomenological truth and

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certainty. Tremendous, irredeemable violence is thus built into the very texture of modern thought and praxis at the root of which lies modern man's desire to *negate and challenge* the primordial violence of the Divine act of creation: the breaking of Eternity into time, the self-splitting of the One into Two, of Two into Many. To see this is to realize the imperative of dismantling and escaping from the systems of physical and social sciences and schools of philosophical thought that have shapped the modernism that imprisons and oppresses all thinking and action in contemporary Euro-American civilization.

Above all it is to hear the call to repentance and renunciation, the summons, the subpoena, to return to our primordial Centre.

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Postscript

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After the definitive undermining of the human-social sciences and indeed of modern thought itself, where do Foucault and his archaeology of knowledge stand? Is Archaeology of Knowledge an advance over Sociology of Knowledge or History of Ideas or over both? Does it—can it—replace them all?

Perphaps it is obvious that Foucaldian Archaeology of Knowledge is, strictly speaking, not an advance over Sociology of Knowledge since it undermines and rejects altogether the whole tradition of immanent teleology of knowledge and civilization within which Sociology of Knowledge, social science in general, the received traditions of History of Ideas are all situated. Foucault is not in quest of a supreme *telos*, a centre of all historical movements; he would scarcely care for "covering laws" or a universal *eschaton*. What he wants to do is to effect decentrings, to map discontinuities and dispersions with a view to constructing a *general* history that would displace any *universal* history. His Archaeology of Knowledge certainly cannot replace Sociology of Knowledge for it is founded on the rejection of the absoluteness and pre-eminence of modern systems of knowledge of man and society as also of the various philosophies of history (especially the evolutionary-developmental-progressive and immanentist phe-nomenological-teleological). There is no logical or epistemological space in which the archaeological method

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could be situated. Indeed, it is doubtful if Foucault could ever be clear on the question of the site of his Archaeology of Knowledge which is designed as a method for the development of "general history", as a contribution to the "history of the present"; naturally, it does not acknowledge or assume any of the major tasks of a sociology of knowledge, viz., that of creating an originary noetic situation, that of making a clearing for (modern) human-social sciences; nor can it assume the task of grounding them in man and history, that of establishing a pseudo-theodicy (or an anthropodicy) and a socio-therapeutics based on it. Or is it that Sociology of Knowledge aims at serving as a "scientific" trickster? His Archaeology of Knowledge already rejects all totalizing and eschatological theories of history from which such tasks arise, and which underwrite the authenticity of these tasks. Indeed it may not be at all uncharitable to hold that Foucault's Archaeology of Knowledge, though never formally repudiated, became obsolete in the hands of Foucault himself when, seeking to go beyond an archaeological approach to the modern Western civilization, he proceeded to the construction of the genealogical method and the study of the will-to-knowledge and biopower.

At the end of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, the author's imaginary interlocuter asks: "What is that fear which makes you reply in terms of consciousness when

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someone talks to you about a practice, its conditions, its rules, and its historical transformations? What is that fear which makes you seek, beyond all boundaries, ruptures, shifts, and divisions, the great historico-transcendental destiny of the Occident?"

Foucault's answer is brief, honest, pregnant: "It seems to me that the only reply to this question is a political one. But let us leave that to one side for today. Perhaps we will take it up again soon in another way."[71]

The act of clarifying the method and practice of the archaeology of Western civilization is situated nowhere but within the *episteme* whose decline and fall it has been Foucault's task to chart and announce. Could it, then, be that Foucault too succumbed to the seductions of the Husserlian transcendental phenomenology and its ethnophilic certainties? Is not ethnophilia one of the lesser-known forms of necrophilia? Is not irony the riskiest of games?

Would it be altogether impossible to co-opt Archaeology of Knowledge and let it take over the failed tasks of all sociologies of knowledge: recreating primal innocence, self-grounding theodicy and the "scientific" art of trickery?

A postscript is hardly the occasion to go into such questions. For the purposes of this Essay, let us go back, very briefly, to Foucault's critique of (modern) Western *Ratio* and its inherent incapacity—suicidal-homicidal in the

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end—to cope with Unreason. Jacques Derrida has given us a profound and creative study of this predicament in his lecture entitled "Cogito and the History of Madness" wherein he reflects on Foucault's seminal work, *Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (translated into English in an abridged version as *Madness and Civilization*). We quote:

"*Sometimes*, Foucault globally rejects the language of reason, which itself is the language of order (that is to say, simultaneously the language of the system of objectivity, of the universal rationality of which psychiatry wishes to be the expression, and the language of the body politic—the right to citizenship in the philosopher's city overlapping here with the right to citizenship anywhere, the philosophical realm functioning, within the unity of a certain structure, as the metaphor or the metaphysics of the political realm). At these moments he writes sentences of this type (he has just evoked the broken dialogue between reason and madness at the end of the eighteenth century, a break that was finalized by the annexation of the totality of language—and of the right to language—by psychiatric reason as the delegate of societal and governmental reason; madness has been stifled): "The language of psychiatry, which is a monologue of reason *on* madness, could be established only on the basis of such a silence. I have not tried to write the history of that language but, rather, the archaeology of that silence." "[72]

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To bring out the far-reaching significance of Foucault's extraordinary project—"an archaeology of that silence", "a history not of psychiatry, but of madness itself, in its most vibrant state, before being captured by knowledge"—Derrida formulates the following key questions:

"But, first of all, is there a history of silence? Further, is not an archaeology, even of silence, a logic, that is, an organized language, a project, an order, a sentence, a syntax, a work? Would not the archaeology of silence be the most efficacious and subtle restoration, the *repetition*, in the most irreducibly ambiguous meaning of the word, of the act perpetrated against madness—and be so at the very moment when this act is denounced?"[73]

Meditating on these questions Derrida observes:

"*Total* disengagement from the *totality* of the historical language responsible for the exile of madness, liberation from this language in order to write the archaeology of silence, would be possible in only two ways.

"*Either* do not mention a certain silence (a *certain* silence which, again, can be determined only within a *language* and an *order* that will preserve this silence from contamination by any given muteness), *or* follow the madman down the road of his exile. The misfortune of the mad, the interminable misfortune of their silence, is that their best spokesmen are those who betray them best; which is to

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say that when one attempts to convey their silence *itself*, one has already passed over to the side of the enemy, the side of order, even if one fights against order from within it, putting its origin into question. There is no Trojan horse unconquerable by Reason (in general). The unsurpassable, unique, and imperial grandeur of the order of reason, that which makes it not just another actual order or structure (a determined historical structure, one structure among other possible ones), is that one cannot speak out against it except by being for it, that one can protest it only from within it; and within its domain, Reason leaves us only the recourse to strategems and strategies. The revolution against reason, in the historical form of classical reason (but the latter is only a determined example of Reason in general. And because of this oneness of Reason the expression "history of reason" is difficult to conceptualize, as is also, consequently, a "history of madness"), the revolution against reason can be made only within it, in accordance with a Hegelian law to which I myself was very sensitive in Foucault's book, despite the absence of any precise reference to Hegel. Since the revolution against reason, from the moment it is articulated, can operate only *within* reason, it always has the limited scope of what is called, precisely in the language of a department of *internal* affairs, a disturbance. A history, that is, an archaeology against reason doubtless cannot be written, for, despite all appearances to the contrary, the

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concept of history has always been a rational one. It is the meaning of "history" or *archia* that should have been questioned first, perhaps. A writing that exceeds, by questioning them, the values "origin," "reason," and "history" could not be contained within the metaphysical closure of an archaeology."[74]

Derrida is very right and his argument, let me hope, is unexceptionable. It is plain that in the modern age the history of unreason or of madness, or, more generally or essentially, of the "other", has been the history of silence, that is, of silencing—if even that; for unreason could be imagined, understood in a supra-rational mode. Perhaps not. The idea of a supra-rational mode of understanding is not an easy one. The discourse on this silence—or silencing—can, then, be composed and articulated within the order of reason and within that order alone. As Derrida points out, it is impossible to write the history of *madness itself*. From this impossibility it does not follow that there is no possibility at all for us of opening ourselves to it, of moving counter-stream to the dark other of reason. Ruling out the possibility of writing an archaeology against reason, Derrida suggests that one should begin with questioning the meaning of "history" or *archia*, by virtue of which questioning one could transcend the "metaphysical closure" of Foucaldian archaeology and attain to a writing that exceeds the values, "origin", "reason" and "history". One should doubtless

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question the meaning of history, but could any *writing* through this questioning or otherwise, exceed the values, origin, reason, history? The ubiquitous sovereignty of reason is, of course, undeniable; but does not the truth (and fact) of unreason undermine this sovereignty? Indeed, the impossibility of escaping from the kingdom of Reason, of revolting against it, confirms, not the absoluteness of Reason, but the contingency of its sovereignty, suggesting at the same time the "primordial, and undivided Logos with respect to which contradiction in general, all wars or polemics, could only be ulterior developments."[75] The impossibility of my escaping history and the rational order is the necessity of my internal, coborn relation to the Logos: Primordial, Undivided.

Foucault's work, no less than Derrida's hope of transcending Foucaldian archaeology (though not through a *writing* that "exceeds the values "origin," "reason," and "history" "), suggests the possibility of our openness to unreason and, ultimately, to the undivided Logos; it is suggested as a pure possibility, as an elusive, ever-receding, indeed, as a not-to-be actualized possibility. As a fundamental logical idea, Possibility always means, in the last analysis, infinite possibility: in other words, possibility is a mystery. Impossibility is not a logical but an anthropological concept. (There are contingent, context-specific impossibilities; as a logical idea, as an absolute

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limitation on possibility, as the negation of its infinity, the concept of impossibility is sub-logical, inconsistent with the truth and reality of the manifested universe.) Impossibility as an anthropological concept is however transcended when anthropology itself is seen as a dense falsification of my self-consciousness the truth of which leads to autology: at which level impossibility is transformed into askesis which is all-possibility by Divine Grace.

Again Derrida is right in emphasizing that it is impossible to speak of madness *itself*. Indeed any *itself* (or "in itself") is ungraspable: reason itself, goodness itself, beauty itself, thinking itself, are all unspeakable: what is humanly graspable, seizable, holdable, retainable, exploitable, manipulable is dead bodies; discourse, speech *itself* is then impossible. I am a speaking being and so there is always the ever-elusive possibility, the not-to-be-actualized possibility of my remaining open to the Itself, to the other side of reason and speech; there is always the ever-elusive possibility of my turning towards the Logos, One and Primordial. To reject this not-to-be-actualized, ever-elusive possibility is to be closed to the Mystery of Possibility, and to be closed to the Mystery of Possibility is to be tempted to overcome, to negate the anthropological and cosmological impossibilities. It is to forget that "The region of possibility does not only embrace the dreams of neurasthenic people, but also those designs of God which

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still lie dormant." (Robert Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*)

The dreams of neurasthenic people: could it be that Musil was thinking of the demiurgic delusions of Marx: "Thus, nature becomes one of the organs of his [man's] activity, which he annexes to his own bodily organs, adding stature to himself in spite of the Bible."[76]

Or, of Spengler's ironic imperative: "Ours is the business of 'civilization'. Let us build aeroplanes, no matter what they carry; roads, no matter where they lead; weapons, no matter what 'values' they defend or attack. For absolute scepticism is our intellectual fate, and absolute engineering our historical Destiny."[77]

Modern science (physical and social) and technology—the dreams of neurasthenic people—stand in the way of our awareness of the designs of God which still lie dormant. By aspiring to conquer anthropological and cosmological impossibilities do I move towards the Logos of infinite possibility, the Mystery of Creation?

More likely and maybe in very truth Musil had you and I and I and you in mind. He was thinking of *our* day-dreams.

For whatever the way of our thought and the level of our sincerity, could we cease to be children *and* victims of our time?

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Notes

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51. *Ibid.*, p. 384.

52. *Ibid.*, pp. 262-263.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 262.

54. मग़रिब के बोस्ताँ में जो रंगे ख़िज़ाँ नहीं,
सुनते हैं उस ज़मीन पै यह आस्माँ नहीं ।
[ब्रजनारायण "चकबस्त" : सुबह-वतन (प्रयाग: इंडियन प्रेस, लिमिटेड, १९२६), पृ० १४६.]

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Annex

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[Extracts from Sir John Woodroffe: *The Garland of Letters* (Madras: Ganesh & Company, 1951)]

The word Vāk (in Latin Vox) comes from the root Vach which means "to speak". The feminine noun Vāk therefore means literally both voice and the word it utters, as also the sound of inanimate objects. It has the same sense therefore as Śabda. Artha is meaning or object. Pratyaya is mental apprehension. All things have a threefold sense, supreme (Parā), subtle (Sūkṣma), gross (Sthūla). Parā-Vāk is the Causal Stress which, in terms of Pratyaya, is the Cosmic Ideation (Sṛṣṭi-kalpanā) of Īśvara. This is the Divine "Word". But Vāk is also an effect, either subtle or gross. Paśyanti Vāk is Vāk actually going forth as Ikṣaṇa (Seeing), producing or manifesting, as Sūkṣma Madhyamā-Vāk, or Hiraṇyagarbha Śabda which is the Mātṛkā state of Śabda as it exists in man prior to its gross manifestation as the Varṇas in spoken speech (Vaikharī-Vāk). In the Ṛgveda, Sarasvati (V. 43-11) is called Pāviravi or daughter of the Lightning, that is, of the great Vajra which sustains the worlds, which according to Sāyaṇa is Madhyamikī Vāk. (See Muir O.S.T.—V. 337 ff.) Spoken speech (Vaikhari) is manifested to the ear by the gross physical sound or Dhvani produced by the contact of the vocal organs on the surrounding air by the effort (Prayatna) to speak. In the transcendental quiescent Brahman (Paramātmā) or Paramaśiva there is

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neither Śabda (Aśabda), Artha (Nirviśaya) nor Pratyaya. There is therefore neither name (Nāma) nor form (Rūpa). In this Infinite Calm there arises a metaphysical Point of Stress or Bindu or Ghanībhūta-Śakti, which stirs forth (Prasarati) as the multiple forces of the universe. This energising is the cause of, and as Jīvātmā is, the World-experience with its duality of subject and object. This play of Śakti takes place in the Ether of Consciousness (Cidākāśa) in such a way that the latter is neither effaced nor affected when the second condition appears, which last is that of both Transcendence and Immanence. This is creation (sṛṣṭi) or, more properly, seeming development (Pariṇāma), since the English word "creation" does not truly express the process. Creation, in the Christian sense, excludes the notion that God is a material cause, creation being neither out of pre-existing matter nor out of God's own substance. Creation also involves an absolutely first appearance. With this reservation the term "creation" is used. More accurately the Brahman Itself, in the form of its Power (Śakti), goes forth (Prasarati). This Sṛṣṭti endures a while (Sthiti) that is for a day of Brahmā, upon which there is according to some, a complete dissolution (Mahāpralaya). Others say that there is no such Mahāpralaya, but that there is always existing some universe, though one or another may disappear. In Mahāpralaya the second state is potentially contained in the undifferentiated unmanifest Māyā-Śakti. Śabdabrahman as

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an Ullāsa of Śiva sinks as it were into the eternally existing Calm, just as the rising wave breaks itself and sinks upon the ocean, or as the spray of a fountain falls again into the waters which feed it. This notion of the "Word" is very ancient. God "speaks" the word and the Thing appears. Thus the Hebrew word for Light is "Aur". Genesis says, "God said: let there be Light (Aur) and there *was* Light (Aur)". The Divine word is conceived of in the Hebrew Scriptures as having creative power. A further stage of thought presents to us the concept of an aspect of the Supreme or Person who creates. Thus we have the Supreme and the Logos, Brahman and Śabdabrahman. [pp. 1-3.]

Śabda-Tanmātra or Apañci-kṛta Ākāśa is Apañci-kṛta-Tanmātra. This is sound as such, that is ideal sound or the cognition of sound apart from conditions such as ear, brain and other material conditions such as air, water, earth, whereby sound is transmitted. In the case of Śabda-Tanmātra, sound is known as an object of the higher mind apart from these conditions. Therefore Śabda-Tanmātra is Śabda not conditional to varying perceptive faculties. It is not sound which is heard by this individual or that, on this plane or that; but it is sound as heard by the Absolute Ear and as uttered by the Absolute Tongue. It is invariable and Apauruśeya. Similarly Rūpa Tanmātra is form

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unconditional, as seen by the Absolute Eye. By "Absolute Ear" is meant the power (Śakti) of apprehending sound in itself or as such without subjection to the varying conditions of Time, Place, (i.e. Plane) and Person. The Stress by which a thing is generated and sustained is the basis of all the five Tanmātras. It is Śabda-Tanmātra as apprehended by the Absolute Ear, Rūpa Tanmātra as apprehended by the Absolute Eye, and so on. From the gross standpoint Śabda is not the Guṇa of Ākāśa alone. In order to be manifested to the human mind and ear sound requires not only gross Ākāśa but Vāyu and the other Bhūtas. For the transmission of sound to the limited ear there must be a material medium for its transmission whether as air, water or solid body. Virāt sound in short assumes the existence of the whole material universe.

To sum up—There is the unmanifest Lord (Avyakta Īśvara) and the manifest Lord (Īśvara). Both are ŚivaŚakti because there is never Śiva without Śakti nor Śakti without Śiva, whether in creation or dissolution. Only in the latter there is nothing but Consciousness (Śakti being Cidrūpiṇī,) and in the former She assumes the form of the universe. For this reason the supreme state may be called Śiva-Śakti and the manifest state Śakti-Śiva to denote the preponderance of the Cit and Māyā aspects respectively. One state is motionless (Niṣpanda), the other with motion (Saspanda). One is soundless (Aśabda) the other manifests as sound

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(Śabda). In one is the Unmanī-Śakti, in the other the Samanī Śakti. The manifest Īśvara displays itself in three forms—causal, subtle, gross. The causal form is Paraśabda, Parāvāk, or Śabdabrahman. This is Īśvara. The rest is Aparāvāk. The subtle form is Madhyamā vāk, which is Hiraṇyagarbha sound, which develops into Virāt Śabda or Vaikharī vāk. The sound is accompanied by movement. That of the causal body first projecting the manifold universe from out of itself is general movement or Sāmānya Spanda, the Śabda of which is the Praṇava or "Om." From Om all other Mantras are derived. Hiraṇyagarbha Śabda is accompanied by special motion (Viśeṣa Spanda) and Virāt Śabda is clearly defined movement (Spaṣṭatara Spanda) manifesting in man as articulate speech, and therefore as the gross or uttered form of Mantra. [pp. 29-31.]

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Afterthought

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Soon it will be half-a-century since Foucault began to provide a trans-Freudian diagnosis of the modern age as the age of the sick man in mad society. Rarely have diagnoses been so profound (in the original sense of the word, which survives at least in Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis*). While Freud provides the Causes and Cure of Civilization—and what a huge analysis it is!—Western Civilization, as far as Cure is concerned, is to-day only much, much nearer its Doom than it was when Freud was seeking, prescribing, providing a Cure.

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Epilogue

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ONE

Ask the historians! In their studies they see with open mouths that which happened long ago, and describe it unceasingly. Go to them and then come back. It was all so long ago. How can I be expected to keep it all inside this overcrowded brain?

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Actually one can express the problem only in a sort of paradox: Any party which would repudiate, not only all belief in the laws, but the nobility as well, would have the whole people behind it; yet no such party can come into existence, for nobody would dare to repudiate the nobility. We live on this razor edge. A writer once summed the matter up in this way: The sole visible and indubitable law that is imposed upon us is the nobility, and must we ourselves deprive ourselves of that one law?

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THREE

Since the Fall we have been essentially equal in our capacity to recognize good and evil; nonetheless it is just here that we seek to show our individual superiority. But the real differences begin beyond that knowledge. The opposite illusion may be explained thus: nobody can remain content with the mere knowledge of good and evil in itself, but must endeavor as well to act in accordance with it. The strength to do so, however, is not likewise given him, consequently he must destroy himself trying to do so, at the risk of not achieving the necessary strength even then; yet there remains nothing for him but this final attempt. (That is moreover the meaning of the threat of death attached to eating of the Tree of Knowledge; perhaps too it was the original meaning of natural death.) Now, faced with this attempt, man is filled with fear; he prefers to annul his knowledge of good and evil (the term, "the fall of man," may be traced back to that fear); yet the accomplished cannot be annulled, but only confused. It was for this purpose that our rationalizations were created. The whole world is full of them, indeed the whole visible world is perhaps nothing more than the rationalization of a man who wants to find peace for a moment. An attempt to falsify the actuality of knowledge, to regard knowledge as a goal still to be reached.

●

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FOUR

"I am here, more than that I do not know, further than that I cannot go. My ship has no rudder, and it is driven by the wind that blows in the undermost regions of death."

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FIVE

There is a small party who are actually of this opinion and who try to show that, if any law exists, it can only be this: The Law is whatever the nobles do.

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SIX

The expulsion from Paradise is in its main significance eternal: Consequently the expulsion from Paradise is final, and life in this world irrevocable, but the eternal nature of the occurrence (or, temporally expressed, the eternal recapitulation of the occurrence) makes it nevertheless possible that not only could we live continuously in Paradise, but that we are continuously there in actual fact, no matter whether we know it here or not.

Why do we lament over the fall of man? We were not driven out of Paradise because of it, but because of the Tree of Life, that we might not eat of it.

We are sinful not merely because we have eaten of the Tree of Knowledge, but also because we have not yet eaten of the Tree of Life. The state in which we find ourselves is sinful, quite independent of guilt.

We were fashioned to live in Paradise, and Paradise was destined to serve us. Our destiny has been altered; that this has also happened with the destiny of Paradise is not stated.

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We were expelled from Paradise, but Paradise was not destroyed. In a sense our expulsion from Paradise was a stroke of luck, for had we not been expelled, Paradise would have had to be destroyed.

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SEVEN

They were offered the choice between becoming kings or the couriers of kings. The way children would, they all wanted to be couriers. Therefore there are only couriers who hurry about the world, shouting to each other—since there are no kings—messages that have become meaningless. They would like to put an end to this miserable life of theirs but they dare not because of their oaths of service.

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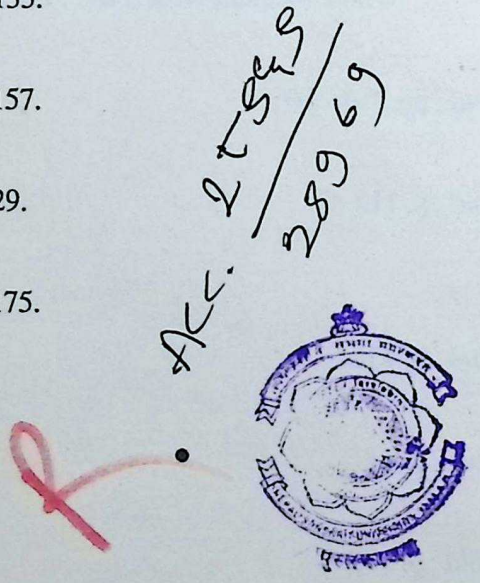

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